THE KIRK ABOVE DEE WATER

H·M·B·REID

THE KIRK ABOVE DEE WATER.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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THE

Kirk above Dee Water

By the Rev. H. M. B. REID.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY S. R. CROCKETT;

AND SIX ENGRAVINGS.

CASTLE-DOUGLAS: ADAM RAE.

1895.

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TO

GRAHAM HUTCHISON OF BALMAGHIE,

FROM

HIS GRATEFUL FRIEND AND MINISTER,

THE AUTHOR.

May 20, 1895.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS little book is not a parish history, but merely embodies a few scattered notices of Balmaghie Church since the year 1615. It has been evolved from a very slender original. In 1893, the Author, desiring to procure some needful funds for a parish purpose, gave a lecture entitled "Some Old Ministers of Balmaghie, with illustrative pictures and other objects." The method of this lecture, briefly put, was, wherever possible, to hang the lecturer's remarks upon some distinct object which was exhibited. Accordingly, the lecture began with the production of Macmillan's Cup, the date of which introduced the mention of Hew M'Ghie.

The chapter entitled *Roll-Call* is practically, therefore, the nucleus of the book. The remaining chapters or "notices" were produced by way of amplifying the details there referred to, in any cases where materials for such larger treatment could be got.

The chapters on the *Kirk* and *Kirkyard* were a necessary addition to the whole. The Author cherishes the hope that they may at least serve as a reliable guide to any persons who may visit Balmaghie Church. He desires to state here his conviction, that a careful study of the Churchyard literature of Galloway would yield most interesting, perhaps valuable, results. It has long

been among his own dreams, to visit reverently every "God's acre" in that province, and compile a "Guide to the Graves of Galloway." But time is wanting for so large a task. To his reverend colleagues, however, he would humbly and earnestly appeal to do all in their power as curators of these parish cemeteries, to prevent important monuments from falling into decay. And he heartily wishes that, soon, some modern "Old Mortality" may arise to give his labour of love to the preservation of the martyrs' stones, and not less (like the lamented "Auld Mortrie" of Crossmichael) to rescuing from "dark oblivion" the epitaphs of bygone parish ministers.

As regards the two little chapters at the close, the Author wishes to say that they embody an attempt to picture a Galloway Parson at his Sunday's work. Some of the details may, to a highly refined taste, seem too homely and familiar; and some, perhaps, touch delicate subjects usually excluded from print. He accepts full responsibility for the whole. Should any sensitive reader deem these chapters beneath the dignity of the subject, he can only urge that real dignity cannot suffer from truth. And he has sought to tell *that*.

The dominating figure in the following pages is, of course, the great Macmillan, whose life-story the Author hopes one day to record at full length. In the course of passing this work through the press, he has been led to make extensive inquiries, and has received aid from many quarters, especially from Dr. John Grieve, a great-great-grandson of the Reformed Presbyterian Father. To him, as also to Rev. Matthew Hutchison, Old Cumnock;

Rev. W. P. Rorison, of Dalserf; and Rev. George Laurie, of the Macmillan Church, Castle-Douglas, he begs to tender his sincere thanks.

In writing the notice of Dr Martin, he received valuable help from Rev. James Brunton of Monimail, through whose kind offices he secured the old lithograph, from which the engraving in the present work was prepared.

A word must be said regarding the engravings. They have been obtained with a great deal of trouble, and from different sources. As above mentioned, the photograph of Dr Martin is a reduced copy of a large lithograph portrait, about 100 years old. That of Mr Stevenson is taken from a portrait widely circulated in the parish, and reproduced by permission of his widow. The picture of Mr Riach is copied from a photograph by Moffat, Edinburgh, by Mr Riach's special permission. The remaining photographs are local productions, of whose merit the instructed reader must be left to judge.

Finally, it should be stated, that a small proportion of the literary matter appeared in various periodicals, and is republished by the kind permission of their proprietors.

Manse of Balmaghie,
Sept., 1895.

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION.

ABOVE Dee Water is a Kirk; and about that again there is a dearer kirkyaird. It is a lonesome spot, at least for those who love not to look down upon broad water meadows in which the Lammas floods spread wide, or who cannot be content with the sough of the leaves for company about the old Manse.

For the sake of my native parish and of the Kirk of Macmillan, I am asked to say a word to introduce the book about it, which my friend the present minister has written.

Mr Reid has given his attention, mainly, to telling the truth in the pages that follow. I have been most successful when I have "lee'd at lairge." But I cannot resist Mr Reid's appeal to be a sponsor on this occasion; for, truth to tell, many of my "lees" were grounded in this parish. Many characters, which I have set forth to strut their hour upon the printed page, once walked in the flesh the sandy roads and took short-cuts across the green fields of Balmaghie. Chief of these, there was "Mary Haffie"

and her sisters—lately gone from us like many other old standard landmarks. Who that remembers the Crossmichael road as it goes over the Knowes by Sandfield, or the Glenlochar "straight mile" where it turns off by the thirteen lums of the "Lang Raw" (it is thirteen, is it not?), can drive along these long vistas on Monday nights, without expecting to come upon Mary's erratic cart, with Mary herself tug-tugging at Billy's obstinate head, hauling him behind her by main force up the brae? Do we not still hear, midway up the Balmaghie woods, the clip of her emphatic tongue, "O Billy, ye awsome person! Ye are no worth a preen—ye feckless, greedy, menseless seefer, ye! Haud up there frae that bank! Did onybody ever see the like o' ye?" Or can we not recall seeing Mary pattering in and out of the Castle-Douglas shops upon the day of the Monday market? With what invincible accuracy did she not rap out her commands over the counter, always concluding with, "And I'll be back for the parcels at three o'clock, sae see an' hae them ready to lift, and dinna keep me an' Billy waitin'."

Then again in the little shop on the long white-washed Laurieston street, do we not remember how Jean and Jennie (I think in later years Jean alone) sat at the receipt of custom? It was no light thing to go in there for a quarter of tea. It was an enterprise over which an hour

might be very profitably spent—and not wasted either. Such high discourse as there was upon the "fundamentals" and the "deeveesions" of Mr Symington's or Mr Kay's last sermon at the Cameronian Kirk of Castle-Douglas! Or it might be a word of canny advice to the young and innocent—"Laddie, dinna ye be ower keen to be takkin' up wi' the lasses—they are but feckless, fleein' heverals, the young yins noo-a-days. Noo, in my young days——"

Whereupon would follow a full and specific account of the immense superiority of "my young days," and specially a very unfavourable comparison of the modesty and humility of the "lasses langsyne" with the forwardness and pertness of "thae daft young hizzies."

Then but-and-ben with the Haffies, one might find David M'Quhae, a very fine type of Galloway man, a mighty fisher of fish, a trustworthy squire of dames, full of courtesy and kindliness, a perfect God-send to a wandering or truant boy. None like David could busk a fly, or give advice as to soft bait. He carried about with him besides much of the savour of an older time, when the relations of life were simpler and all men walked closer to one another. David was a strong Tory of the old sort all his life, yet he went about breathing a simple equality akin to the original democracy of

Eden. As a rival used severely to say of him—"He was nae mair feared to speak to the laird or the minister than to ony ither man!" And from that little house on the brae what examples of consistent living and good kirk-going went forth! From the one end went the three old maids, six long miles to Castle-Douglas, each with her Bible and her neatly folded Sabbath handkerchief. They went to hear "the word of God properly preached" in the Kirk of the Hill Folk, which had never fyled its hands with "an Erastian Estaiblishment!"

From the other end went forth David, and it might be one or two dear to him, equally strong in their own faith, and equally walking in the good way. In amity Auld Kirk and Cameronian dwelt together but-and-ben all the week. But on the Sabbath coined money could not have made them sit down and worship in each other's sanctuaries. All Scottish history was in the fact. Wet or dry, hail or shine, plashing Lammas flood or wreathed snow, David M'Quhae went his good four miles over the wild moor to his beloved Kirk of Balmaghie — concerning which this present book is written by one whose knowledge of its history is infinitely greater than mine. My friend, Mr Reid, will have much to tell of faithful ministers, of worthy

elders, and of silent, attentive flocks. But I am sure he will have none loyaller, more conscientious, to write about than David M'Quhae of Laurieston.

Dear dust lies in that kirkyaird, and as the years pass by, for many of us, more and more of it gathers under the kirk on the hill. The tides of the world, its compulsions, its needs, and its must be's, lead me up the loaning but seldom. Indeed I am not often there, save when the beat of the passing bell calls another to the long and quiet rest.

But when the years are over, many or few, and our Galloway requiem, "Sae he's won awa," is said of me, that is the bell I should like rung. And there in the high corner I should like to lie, if so the fates allot it, among the dear and simple folk I knew and loved in youth. Let them lay me not far from the martyrs, where one can hear the birds crying in the minister's lilac-bushes, and Dee kissing the river grasses, as he lingers a little wistfully about the bonny green kirk-knowe of Balmaghie.

S. R. CROCKETT.

CONTENTS.

		Page.
	Prefatory Note	vii.
	A Word of Introduction. By S. R. Crockett ...	x.
I.	The Kirk Above Dee Water	17
II.	The Kirkyard	29
III.	Roll-call, 1615 to 1895	41
IV.	An Episode in Galloway	48
V.	"The End of That Man"	55
VI.	"The House of Rimmon"	67
VII.	The Twelfth Paraphrase	81
VIII.	More about the Twelfth Paraphrase	95
IX.	"Factor James"	100
X.	A Galloway Herd's Sunday: *Old Style*	113
XI.	A Galloway Herd's Sunday: *New Style*	119
	Epilogue: *The River and the Kirk*	124
	Index	126

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	Page.
The "Auld Kirk," Balmaghie	17
William Lyon Riach, M.A.	32
Thomas Stevenson	48
The Dee below Balmaghie Kirk	64
Samuel Martin, D.D.	80
The Present Incumbent	112

THE "AULD KIRK," BALMAGHIE.

I.

THE KIRK ABOVE DEE WATER.

SUCH is the homely name by which our Galloway folk know the little "harled" kirk which stands on a slight eminence above the Dee. The nearness of the river lends a picturesque colour to our local phrases, of which the above is one. A Balmaghie man goes *through* the Water of Dee to reach Crossmichael Village. To a Crossmichael man the minister of this parish is "the man across the water." The Church and the River are linked together not unfitly, since each is a symbol of eternity and peace.

In this opening "Notice" some particulars may properly be given regarding Balmaghie Church. The present building is probably only the second erected at this commanding spot since the Reformation. Of the first church only a small part of the eastern gable was preserved at the time when the second and existing one was built in 1794. In Galloway there is a hereditary covetousness of stones for building purposes, and perhaps a slight confusion at times in regard to *meum* and *tuum*. We know how the fine Threave ruin was being despoiled to furnish forth byres and dykes, when the authorities interposed and saved a remnant. The tiny old kirk of "Balmakethe" was almost entirely rased, less fortunate in this respect than Anwoth, Parton, and some others. What still stands owes its immunity to the circumstance

that a fine monument to William M'Kie had been built into the gable about 1763. The heritors of that olden time spared this fragment out of respect for Rev. Mr M'Kie. The remainder they destroyed out of respect to their own purses, and applied the stones in raising the present church.

This older church, judging by the ground plan still traceable on the kirkyard turf, must have been of small size. It was probably about 18 yards long and 12 yards broad, and cannot have held more than a hundred people, even when seated close together on "cutty stools." That it was a pre-Reformation edifice seems certain from the fact that it lay due east and west. It is therefore the chancel end which is preserved, if chancel there was. Behind the M'Kie monument lay the simple altar or Communion table. The pulpit was perhaps at the right hand side. I have never been able to find any stone bearing such marks as would identify its connection with this the church of Macmillan, but doubtless such are somewhere in the present building. It was in this quaint little narrow church, with its tiny belfry and small windows, that that great man made his public stand for the Covenants for 28 years. The bell by which he called his attached flock together was not the same as that which now hangs in the present tower. This bears the date 1794, and the brief inscription "*Presented to the Parish of Balmaghie by Thomas Gordon, Esq.*" Probably the "bethral" or "bedral" of the time tolled the bell by means of a long rope hanging loosely from the gable, and offering strange temptations to restless childhood or mischievous youth.

There was no vestry, the manse being so near. This pastoral abode also is mostly demolished. It consisted, probably, of two double rooms on the ground floor, and attics to correspond. There was, perhaps, a cellar, where the good man kept his peats. From this modest dwelling he issued gravely at the canonical hour each Lord's Day, the "books" having first been carried up by the beadle. I have in my care the very Bible which thus travelled to and fro between manse and church in 1778, when Philip Morison was minister. It is of smaller size than the one now in use, much more closely printed, and much worn and dogseared at the end of S. Luke's Gospel and the beginning of S. John's. Either the preacher placed his notes there, or else he was used to dwell much on the death and resurrection of our Lord. Which is, indeed, the main duty of every Christian preacher. The Bible in question was printed at Edinburgh in 1752 by "Adrian Watkins, His Majesty's Printer." It has a copious appendix of Biblical antiquities, and the authorised metrical Psalms. There are no paraphrases or hymns, however, for the excellent reason that none such had yet been approved by the General Assembly.

When the minister appeared at the foot of the brae, the beadle, as in duty bound, saluted his arrival with a lusty bout of ringing on the little bell. The lingering gossips in the kirkyard hastily bundled into church, and the solemn exercises began.

In a more ancient time, however, the bell rang at eleven o'clock forenoon as well as at twelve. Either the minister or a "reidar" occupied a profitable hour in reading and commenting on Holy Scripture. In 1560 Thomas Chapman

was "reidar," with a stipend of "XX lib." (£20) from the revenues of the Abbey of Holyrood. The tenacious grip of old customs appears in the fact that still, as then, the bell is rung at eleven a.m., though few now remember the original reason. Across the Dee Water the bell of Crossmichael (or "Crossmeikle") church rings at ten a.m., while in some other riverside parishes it is set swinging as early as eight or nine a.m. Thus, along the green meadow-flats of Dee, an unbroken chain of sacred sound might be traced, each hour of the Sabbath morning being punctuated by a call to prayer.

In 1794 the present church was built, and a new manse arose about the same time. Both were erected on new sites. The new church was placed almost north and south, with a small quaint bell-tower at the south; the wooden louvre boards of which at once became a haunt of starlings, while the revolving vane afforded them an agreeable and airy point of view. Starlings monopolise the wooden turret still. The eastern roof proved irresistible to thousands of bees, who buzzed all the summer's day around the east door, and crept in and out of the crevices between the huge heavy slates. The bees of Balmaghie Kirk may be said to be famous in the Stewartry, and were a constant source of both profit and loss—the profit accruing to the incumbent as a rule, while neighbouring bee-keepers complained badly at swarming-time that "oor bees are awa' ower the water to Balmaghie Kirk."

The gathered honey was removed periodically in large quantities, and is said to have been of excellent quality. A large brown stain on one corner of the white plastered roof showed where the busy workers kept their store.

The congregation instinctively lifted their eyes to this spot whenever the Psalm* was given out which sings of

"Honey, honey from the comb,
That droppeth. . . ."

Alas! the bees of Balmaghie Kirk are creatures of the past. Though perishing in hundreds inside the church every week, they had boldly held their ground, and even vastly multiplied, till the fatal centenary came (1894), when the work of improvement swept them finally away. In September of that year there was a Homeric conflict between the Builder and the Bee. The plaster had been dislodged, and exposed numberless hosts armed for the fray. Three days the battle raged. On the one side it was waged with a smoke-test machine discharging volumes of sulphurous acid; on the other the dauntless bees had only their natural weapon. The issue could not be doubtful. Not a bee was left to tell the tale. Great masses of honeycomb were torn from the beams, as Samson tore it in his day from the lion's ribs. Since then desolation reigns in the once busy home of the Kirk Bee. The poor insect has been most thoroughly disestablished and disendowed. May the omen be averted!

The swallow is no infrequent attender at Balmaghie Kirk. More than once, on some still hot morning, during service, the congregation have been startled by a rapid flicking of wings against the skylights in the "lofts." It was a "wandering bird" which had flown in at the open door. To preach with this tiny, restless creature darting back and forward in front of one's pulpit was a somewhat severe test of mental concentration. There was a sore

* Psalm xix. 10.

temptation to follow the graceful creature's flashing flight from end to end. None at such moments failed to recall our fine old Psalm *—

> "The swallow also for herself
> Hath purchased a nest—
> Ev'n thine own altars . . "

Certainly such visitants were less troublesome than the hosts of crawling, buzzing bees which were once so familiar as members of our congregation. There is no record of any one being stung; but tradition remains of one incumbent who spent his time in church, when already an old man and past preaching, in dexterously catching and killing the humming insect. And the present minister once had a narrow escape, if his beadle may be trusted. "I wis awfu' feart for ye the day," said the old man; "there wis a big bumble-bee bizzin' aboot yer heid time o' sermon, an' I was feart ye wud maybe pit oot yer haun', in preachin' like, ye ken, and the beast wad stang ye!"

Like other churches, Balmaghie Kirk shelters its share of owls and bats. For long a white owl resided there, and might at times be seen flitting, ghost-like, round the fields near at hand. On one occasion of repairs as many as 39 bats were counted (and killed), each suspended head downwards from a rafter. Owls and bats are generally the symbols of utter desolation, but here they take refuge because the spot has an unusual sacred quiet. The little precinct of the glebe, lying in a ring-fence around the church and manse, is a safe sanctuary not only for such winged creatures, but for the timid and anxious hare and the retiring hedgehog.

* Psalm lxxxiv.

Let us complete this natural history of the Kirk above Dee Water. There is a significant fact still to set down. The only verses ever penned by any of its incumbents, which have attained a world-wide circulation, were those of the well-known Twelfth Paraphrase, pointing a moral for "indolent and slothful" people from the example of the ant. Why Dr Samuel Martin did not rather choose to employ the bee for the edifying purpose it is not easy to see; unless it arose from the curious circumstance that the bee is only four times* mentioned in the Bible, and in three out of these four cases it is spoken of with evident distaste. The Paraphrases, of course, required a suitable scripture text, and there is none such about the bee. Certainly bees have always been a far more familiar sight to the good people of Balmaghie Kirk than ants.

Enough has been said of the creeping and flying things which have made their home here. Unhappily, modern requirements tend to discourage these harmless visitants. In 1894, one hundred years after the present church was built, a most complete renovation was begun and carried out. By dint of pushing on the work, all was completed in a sort of fashion before that year closed. The church was re-opened on 30th December, and those who had left it on the closing Sunday found themselves ushered into what is practically a new building. The little nave has been lengthened, bringing out more clearly the cruciform shape. At the end of it a fine three-light window of stained glass, prepared by Mr Arthur Dix of London, is at once the object of attention on entering at the main door. The central light shows the Crucifixion, with the words, "It

* Deut. i. 44; Judg. xiv. 8; Ps. cxviii. 12; Isa. vii. 18.

is finished." On the right of the Cross, in a side-light, is the mother of our Lord, with scroll, "Woman, behold thy Son." On the left has been depicted the Beloved Apostle, the text being, "Son, behold Thy Mother." A memorial brass on the sill contains the following inscription:—"To the Glory of God, and in loving memory of my mother, who died 2nd Dec., 1893—This window is erected by J. R. Hutchison."

This window is much admired by competent judges for the beauty and charm of the figures, and especially for the softened light which it admits.

At the opposite end, as of old, is the pulpit—an oaken one—standing on a slightly raised platform, with a recess containing a harmonium behind it. The upper wall behind the pulpit is entirely concealed by a large screen of wood, in three panels. The centre contains the Apostle's Creed and Lord's Prayer. The side panels are filled with the X. Commandments. The pulpit and screen are designed after those in S. George's, Albemarle Street, London, by Mr Gibson of Edinburgh. In front of the pulpit stands a small Communion Table of dark oak, with a carved border. The choir are accommodated on each side, within a high wooden enclosure. There is some good wrought-iron work in the pulpit railing.

On either side of the pulpit and screen is a narrow stained glass window. That on the right of the minister has a medallion of S. Andrew, the patron saint of Balmaghie. On the left is S. Peter with the keys.

On the pulpit is a memorial brass with the following inscription:—"To the Glory of God, and in loving memory of my mother, Annette Mary Hay Thomson née Craufuird,

born 1819, died 2nd Dec., 1893—This Pulpit, Screen, Side Windows, and Communion Table, are erected by Graham Hutchison of Balmaghie. O ye spirits and souls of the just, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever."

The whole area has been re-seated in pitch pine, and the old stiff and straight pews are replaced by wider and more comfortable ones. The ancient lofts remain almost unchanged, and are thought to be somewhat out of harmony with the general effect. An extremely good ceiling of pine has taken the place of the old white plaster roof, the main coupling beams being now exposed.

It is not unworthy of mention that both ventilation and heating have been thoroughly secured, the one by "Tobin's tubes" and Boyle's roof-ventilators—the other by a system of high-pressure hot-water pipes.

A small vestry and porch were added. These, though not, perhaps, an architectural feature, have been found a great advantage and comfort to pastor and people.

The sole relic almost of the old interior, if we except the walls and "lofts," is a large pair of "ladles," or long-handled collecting-boxes, made of fine Memel pine. The old Communion Table has found a refuge for its last days in the vestry. And two massive pewter plates still keep guard in the "lofts," awaiting the offerings of such as ascend beyond reach of ladle. They bear the date 1782.

The renovation of Balmaghie Church cost about £1000, mostly derived from voluntary contributions. The result is to make it, internally, "a place to worship God in, not a bare barn," as a friendly parishioner one day remarked. Much may yet, however, be done to complete

the sacred work. The side walls of the nave should have narrow pointed windows of stained glass, two pairs on each side. The present incumbent here sets it down, without further remark, that each pair could be introduced for a sum of about £30 or less. A single window could be inserted for about £15. Externally the little tabernacle on the hill is scarcely altered at all. No one, looking at the outside, would dream that so much care and money had been expended within. But this is not wholly an unwelcome feature, since the work has been done not "to be seen of men," but to give glory to God.

NOTE TO CHAPTER I.

The following tablets are also to be found in Balmaghie Church :—

I.

Sacred to the memory of the Reverend Alexander Gibson, minister of this Parish, who was born at Lanark 3rd April, 1800, and died 5th August, 1846, at Almeida Hill, Hamilton, where his mortal remains are deposited. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.—Rev. xiv. 13.

This Tablet is erected by his widow.

II.

Sacred to the memory of Major James Graham, fourth son of Sir James and Lady Catherine Graham of Netherby, Registrar-General for 39 years. Born 13th September, 1804; died 20th May, 1888. The righteous live for evermore: their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High.—Wisdom of Solomon v. 15.

III.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD,

AND IN MEMORY OF

JOHN MACMILLAN, A.M.,

Born at Barncauchlaw, Minnigaff, 1669:
Ordained Minister of the Parish of Balmaghie 1701;
Accepted the Pastorate of the United Societies 1706,
Which office he laboriously discharged for 47 years:
Died at Broomhill, Bothwell, 1753. Buried in
Dalserf Churchyard.

A Covenanter of the Covenanters:
A Father of the Reformed Presbyterian Church:
A Faithful Minister of JESUS CHRIST.

This Tablet is placed here by his Great-great-grandson,
JOHN GRIEVE, M.D., Glasgow: 1895.

Spelling of the Name Macmillan.—Macmillan graduated A.M. at Edinburgh University in June, 1697, and signed the Roll as follows :—

JOANNES Mc MILLAN.

But in 1695 he signed the Matriculation Register thus :—

JOHN Mc MILLAN.

At the meeting of Commission of General Assembly at Edinburgh, June 9, 1704, he signed his statement thus :—J. MACKMILLAN. The same also a month later.

On 14th August, 1706, he signed his "Submission" to the United Societies thus :—J. M'MILLAN.

On the Dalserf Monument it is MACMILLAN. But on the ancient fragment placed there by himself to the memory of two daughters and a son, it is spelled Mc MILLAN once more, as in his college days. So it stands, also, in the epitaphs to his first wives in Balmaghie Churchyard.

Dr Grieve and I decided, with the valuable advice of Dr Goold of Edinburgh and Professor Laidlaw, to adopt the full form Macmillan in the memorial brass.

There is little doubt, however, that the most ancient form was simply M'Millan.

II.

THE KIRKYARD.

THE reader is now invited to accompany me to the "auld kirkyard." We enter by the rusty iron gate between massive stone pillars wreathed in ivy. Immediately on the left is the most imposing tomb in the place, that devoted to the family of Douglas, and "sanctioned by the heritors." The present representative of the family is John Douglas, Esq., Bisley, formerly factor to Lady Hawke. The polished granite column which commemorates the Rev. Thomas Stevenson was erected by his widow, and is surmounted, like several others in this churchyard, by the funeral urn. The name of Crockett is now constantly associated with Balmaghie. Admirers of the "Stickit Minister" and the "Raiders" will like to visit the simple gravestones of the family, which, however, mostly spells its name *Crocket*. There are three stones bearing the name.

Still keeping to the left, one cannot fail to notice a fine runic cross, the work of the well-known Dumfries sculptor, Dods. It is all the more interesting because erected by a laird to the memory of a faithful man-servant. Near it stands a square column commemorating one of the parish benefactors—William Neilson—of whom it is recorded that "*he was born in Meikle Dornald, 22nd Sept., 1772, died at Gatehouse-of-Fleet 8th Sept., 1857, and is buried here.*

His days were spent with care and industry in his native land and in America, being ever a zealous advocate for civil and religious liberty. He left a donation of Five Pounds per annum for the education of poor children not on the pauper list of the Parish."

This tomb deserves attention as being sacred to one of the only two benefactors hitherto enjoyed by Balmaghie. The other was a Sergeant M'Ghie, who is not buried here, and whose bequest is shared by the Parish of Balmaclellan.

On another face of the Neilson monument we read—"*The Honourable John Neilson, Member of the Executive Council of Canada, born at Dornal 17th July, 1776, died at Cape Rouge, Quebec, 1st Feb., 1818, and is buried at Valcartier, near the City.*" A notable family these Neilsons must have been, and Balmaghie is justly proud of them.

Rounding the corner of the church, we come to the consecrated ground, where custom was that Roman Catholics laid their dead. Just outside the wall, and beyond this sacred spot, the workmen engaged in digging a trench found in 1894 a human skeleton, lying with the face towards the west. The theory is that this had been a suicide, who, according to the inhuman practice of former days, was buried outside the holy ground, and also, no doubt, laid in the reverse position to the faithful. Here it may be noted, that every gravestone in this place, as elsewhere in the kirkyard, stands facing the east, for reasons which do not require to be set down.

In this dull corner, too, by a strange irony of events, it has been usual to inter still-born babes and those dying unbaptized—always at sundown and with scant ceremony. For such formerly no bell was tolled, and no prayer was

said. This last is now mended as far as may be. Here, too, in 1893, a poor tramp, found dead at Hensol in the snow, was buried with due reverence for a "dear brother departed." He lies in his nameless grave, his tramping well ended.

A little further, we note a singular monument, which is indeed unique in our little churchyard. It is that erected to Mr Lockhart Mure of Livingstone, whose features are strikingly preserved in high relief on the stone. Four female heads, very gracefully carved, look out from the four corners. Mr Mure's son informed me that his father's face was very exactly reproduced.

Continuing our circuit, we soon reach a cluster of "thruch-stones," as the old four-posters are called, dedicated to what was once the chief family in the parish — the M'Ghies. This powerful sept owned almost the whole parish at one time, but bit by bit they parted with their lands, until now, and since the middle of the eighteenth century, they do not possess a single rood. Those buried here are M'Ghies of Airds, probably the direct representatives of the M'Ghies of Balmaghie. We need not remind the reader that Balmaghie itself means the *Township of the M'Ghie*. One of these M'Ghies—Alexander—married as his second wife Agnes, a daughter of Rev. William M'Kie, the successor of Macmillan. Their daughter in turn died at Maxwelltown in 1847.

The last representatives were said to be two sisters, who long resided at Burnside, near Lochenbreck, but are both for some years deceased.

Quite near the great M'Ghie stones is the "Ministers' Corner." Here are clustered together no fewer than four

ministers, three of them incumbents of Balmaghie. It is but doing my duty to name these in order:

(1) John M'Millan, died 26th July, 1700, aged 37; with his wife, Catherine Williamsone, died 31st August 1700, aged 37.

(2) William M'Kie, died 30th Jan., 1763, aged 84; with his wife and children.

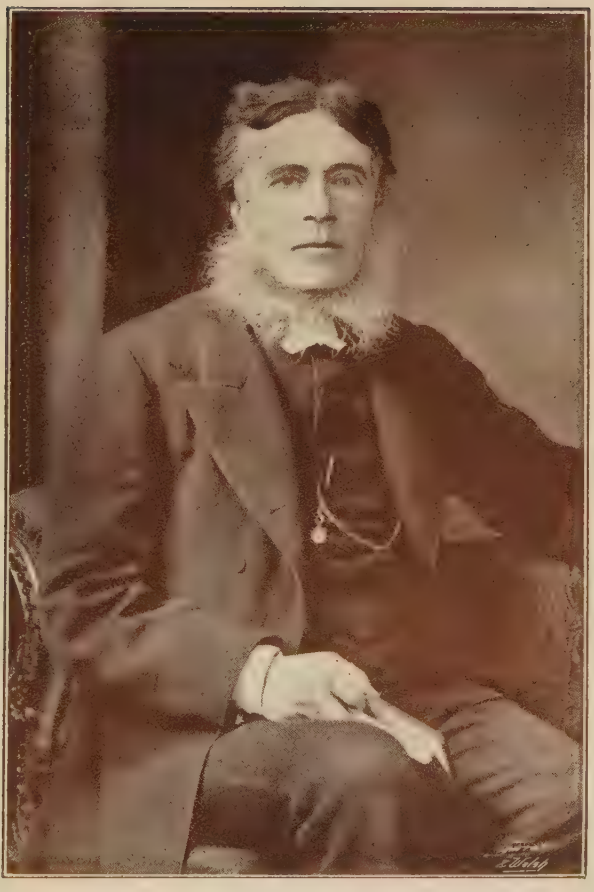
(3) James Henderson, died 1838—unmarried.

This spot was sacred to the manse family. Here we find buried two out of the great Macmillan's *three* wives. His first wife was Jean Gemble, died in 1711, aged 38. Next, the doughty Covenanter made a high social connection, as the following epitaph shows:—"*Here ly the Remains of Mistress May Gordon, daughter of Sir Alexander Gordon of Earlstoun, formerly Spouse to Edward Goldie of Craigmuie, and thereafter to the Rev. Mr Jo. M'Millan, Minister of the Gospel in Balm'Ghie, who departed this life May 5th, 1723—of her age 43.*"

There follow some verses, which will be found in the end of this chapter. This stone purports to have been "*Renewed by Andrew and William Galloway of Sandhills, Great-great-grandsons, 1843.*"

Macmillan's third wife was Grace Russell, but her place of burial is uncertain.

A touching domestic episode is suggested by another stone in the "Ministers' Corner." It is to the memory of a son of the Rev. Philip Morison, minister from 1777 to 1803. This son, John Morison, died at the early age of 12, and his father's pen it was, doubtless, which traced the following eulogy:—"*He was a youth of good capacity and*



WILLIAM LYON RIACH.

of the most amiable dispositions, which endeared him to his fond parents while he lived, and made him to be deeply regretted by them when he died. Hunc tantum ostendebant Fata terris. Providence was pleased to show him but for a short while on earth, and to take him away in mercy at an early period from the evil to come."

Here, too, is buried Mrs Philip Morison, the poor lad's mother, who died in 1799.

No other clerical tombs stand here except that of Nathaniel M'Kie, minister at Crossmichael, a son of Wm. M'Kie. As already stated, Thomas Stevenson lies a long way off, nearer to the manse. And of the eleven ministers of the parish since 1694 four are buried elsewhere, two cannot be traced, and two survive. Of the four lying in distant cemeteries, one (the *alter* Macmillan) is interred at Dalserf beneath an imposing monument; one (Dr. Martin) lies in the "Ministers' Yard" at Monimail; one is in Hamilton (Mr Gibson); and the fourth (Dr. Freeland) rests somewhere in America.

As there is a corner, quite near the old demolished church, for the parish clergy, so a special retreat has been found for the Free Church ministers. It is naturally a good way off from the former, and but one pastor as yet reposes here, beneath a handsome monument, erected by his people and their friends. He was the Rev. John Johnstone, for 22 years F. C. minister in the parish, and author of a singular poem on the "Disruption" of 1843. Near at hand the present F. C. minister—Rev. A. B. Craig—has selected a burying-place, where already a little child is at rest. A Free Church elder, who died with awful suddenness in the fields while talking to Mr Craig, is

buried close by. And here others of like religious profession desire to rest.

Returning to Mr M'Kie's ivy-grown monument, we find quite near it the well-known stone commemorating in verse the "two Davids Hallidays," shot down on the parish border in 1685. The lines will be found at the end of this chapter, but we now copy the prose inscription:—

"*Here lies David Halliday, portioner in Meifield, who was shot upon the 20 of Febr. 1685, and David Halliday, once in Glengape, who was likewise shot upon the 11 of July 1685, for their adherence to the principles of Scotland's Covenanted Reformation.*"

Close to this is another covenanter—Alexander Charters, died 1715, aged 53, who, however, did not receive the martyr's crown. His memorial was erected by Robert Charters, whose own quaint epitaph occupies the lowest part of the stone:—

"*Here lies the Dust of Robert Charters, who was valued by all competent Judges a man of Excellent Sense and Great Integrity. He died in the Service of Lady Greenlaw, June 24,* 1764."

There are also some quaint rhymes, to be found with the collection at the end. The only remaining martyr's stone is at some distance. It bears the inscription:—

"*Here lies George Short, who was pursued and taken and instantly shot to death under cloud of night in the paroch of Tongueland, by Grier of Lag and the Earle of Anandale, because of his adherence to Scotland's Reformation, Covenants, National and Solemn League, 1685.*"

We now throw together some miscellaneous notes on the "Kirkyard." The frequent occurrence of *great ages* will strike the observer. Three score and ten is quite a common attainment in Balmaghie. Four score is also frequent. There are at least three instances of ninety years and upwards. William M'Clachrie, one of M'Kie's elders, died in 1798, aged 90. William Milligan died in 1775, at 92; his brother, Paul, in 1768, at 86. The oldest I can find is William M'Gowan, died 1883, at 94. To the last he was able to read Spurgeon's weekly sermon. On the other hand, death has had its victims in early life. There are two inscriptions—the shortest in the churchyard—which in this respect are full of pathos. The one is a small granite block with the words—"*Blanche Edwards died July 5, 1873, aged 20. Thy will be done.*" The other is even shorter—"*Catherine Ward died 4th March, 1828, aged 25.*" Blanche Edwards was a governess at Livingstone. Who Catherine Ward was I cannot learn. Her whole story is on the tiny fragment, about a foot square, which marks her grave.

There are many commemorated here whose dust has mingled with foreign soil. Here is a list of some foreign places named on tombstones:—St. Lucia, San Diego, Antigua, Jamaica, Bergen Neck in New Jersey, Granada, Tobago, Demerara.

I have mentioned the discovery of a supposed suicide's remains outside the hallowed ground. A different kind of tragedy is set forth in the inscription recording how "*David M'Lellan, of Antigua, merchant, aged 34, and William Moffat, preacher of the Gospel, aged 30,*" were

drowned in Carlingwark Loch on 4th July, 1801, by the "*oversetting of a pleasure boat.*"

One curious aspect of these mortuary records is the occurrence of what may be called *lapsed lairds* and *lapsed names.* By the first I mean the names of persons once heritors in the parish, whose fortunes have since sorely declined. Three stones at least belong to such. The names are William Kelvie, Esq. of Crae, died 15th May, 1820; William Burnet of North Quintinespie, died 1855; and David Clark of Slogarie. Till lately all three had living descendants in the parish.

Of lapsed names of places the following occur:— Craig-croft, Mill-house, Fine View, Dubbidale (where Mr Dickson, *dyer*, resided), Longley, Highpark, Bush o' Bield, Wood-foot, Hill of Grange, Ironganoch (Erngenoch). These represent either houses demolished, or houses whose name has been changed by new owners.

The oldest stone in the churchyard is that placed above the martyr, George Short, which most probably dates from 1685.

There is a curious uneven slab of whinstone now erected in the ground, which I found to have the following mysterious inscription:—"*John M'Kinel in Barnbord aught this ston, Janu.* (?), *1731, as propr right.*" Gravestones were evidently coveted at that time, and this John M'Kinel deemed it wise to earmark this rough slab for his own burial. But man proposes and God disposes. The stone was found lying in a corner, and John M'Kinel's remains are without a monument after all.

Another curiosity is a stone dating from 1768, which has the following symbols crowded together on one face:

—Cherub with outspread wings, cross-bones, skull, coffin, and hour-glass *with wings*. I have not seen this winged hour-glass anywhere else.

Symbols are not numerous, and usually conventional—the urn, broken column, cross. One stonemason's tomb has the square and compasses. The cherub occurs several times. The customary phrases are found—*Requiescat in pace* (generally on Roman Catholic tombs), *Memento mori*, and the ordinary texts of Scripture.

The *churchyard poetry* is an interesting feature. I have chosen to keep it to the last, and to add now a collection of these elegiac verses.

VERSES IN BALMAGHIE CHURCHYARD.

1. Beneath this stone two Davids Hallidays
Doe lye, whose souls now sing their Maker's praise;
To know if curious passengers desyre
For what, by whom, and how they did expyre:
They did oppose this nation's perjurey,
Nor would they joyn with lordly prelacy:
Indulging favours from Christ's enemies
Quench'd not their zeal. This monument then cryes—
These were the causes, not to be forgot,
Why they by Lag so cruelly were shot.
One name, one cause, one grave, one heaven do ty
Their souls to that one God eternally.

Martyr's Stone, 1685.

2. Here lies beneath this humble monument
The precious dust of an exalted Saint:
A Mary rightly nam'd, whose gracious heart
Ev'n from her youth still chose the better part:
High Birth, Health, Honour, could not make her proud,
But Grace and Vertue made her Great and Good;
For piety and prudence liv'd renown'd,
And now is with Immortal Glory crown'd.

To Mistress May Gordon, second wife of John Macmillan, 1723. (Probably composed by himself).

3. Alas! we fondly thought that heaven designed
His bright example mankind to improve:
All they should be, was pictured in his mind,
His thoughts were virtue, and his heart was love.
To John Milroy, aged 17, 1826.

4. *In Memory of William M'Caa and his wife Elizabeth M'Menzies, who died in Airds of Kells. He, on 13th July 1816 in the 60th year of his age. And she, five days afterwards, in her 52d year. Leaving nine surviving children to lament the loss of their affectionate Parents.*

While sad remembrance paints the scene of wo,
Our tortur'd breasts their anguish will reveal:
In spite of consolation, tears will flow,
And silent tell the poignant grief we feel.

5. This humble grave, tho' no proud structure grace,
Yet honest truth adorns the sacred place;
For 'neath this sod, entomb'd in hallow'd dust,
Lyes one who was in all his dealings just.
Lo! fond remembrance drops a pious tear,
And holy friendship stands a mourner here.
To Nathaniel Bodden by his Widow, 1826.

6. Fresh in the morn, the Summer's rose
Hangs withering ere 'tis noon:
We scarce enjoy the balmy gift,
But mourn the pleasure gone.
To John Morison, aged 12, by his father, Rev. Philip Morison, 1778.

M'Kie's Epitaph, 1763.

7. The mem'ry of the just is blest,
How precious is his name;
It is like new-blown roses sweet,
For ever lasts his Fame.

The man of God, whose light and life
Much serv'd Religion's cause,
In dark Oblivion should not ly,
But have his just Applause.

O Balmaghie! lament thy loss;
But boundless grief is vain;
Thy much-lov'd Pastor is gone home—
Death to the Saints is gain.

Live as he liv'd, and Death shall soon
Transport you to the Shore
Of endless life, where heavenly Souls
Shall meet to part no more.

8. Beneath this gently polish'd stone
Is treasured precious clay—
Clay that shall shine bright as the sun
At the great rising day.
True to the Church, like rocks unmoved
In rough and stormy seas,
Was Alexander Charters still,
In reeling, staggering days.
Parents and children to the cause
Of Christ were always true,
And with a heaven of endless joy,
They are rewarded now.
Alexander Charters, died 1707, aged 53.

9. Remember, man, as you go by,
As you are now, so once was I;
As I am now, so must thou be,—
Prepare thyself to follow me.
Alexander Livingstone, died 1771, aged 71.

10. If youthful innocence the laurel gains,
It's hers, lies here in death's domains;
Her virtues and her worth unknown,
The Rose was pluck't when scarcely grown.
Spouse of James M'Clacharty in Boreland,
died 1794.

11. Slow pac'd consumption, with insidious sway,
Seized on her frame, and drained her life away;
From lingering pain she kindly was reliev'd,
And slept in Him in whom she had believ'd.
Agnes Andrew, Glenlochar, died 1835, aged 29.

NOTE TO CHAPTER II.

The following, from an old Balmaghie boy, may be interesting :—

"Sept. 25, 1893. . . . I was once in the church, 36 years ago, then a lad of 12 years of age. I have no recollection of the preacher; but I have a distinct remembrance of mice, their dirt, and dust. Again, I was there 22 or 23 years ago (perhaps less), at the funeral of an aunt from Laurieston. Nothing impressed me then but a bad road over which we had to go to church for burial. Only, I was interested in seeing them all . . . drink whisky and eat biscuits before starting.

"I visited the place last June, and what a change—in it or me, I cannot tell. The churchyard was well kept, and all about was tidy and clean, and I was charmed with the situation, and was amazed, as I wandered through the tombstones, to find it the resting-place of so many relations. Besides the nameless grave of a grandfather and grandmother, ... I felt as if I had returned to my youth, and could see and talk to the men and women whose tombstones recorded that they were not; and to a grandfather whom I never knew, as he died before my father had knowledge of him. There is a strange, awful, pathetic interest in wandering about the place where your forbears lie, and whose existence you were never acquainted with. I felt I had a claim on the place. What an ideal spot to sleep one's long last sleep in! Death seemed to me that day to have nothing to do with Balmaghie churchyard, but a desirable place to rest in peace. Such a peace I should think William Nicol had in his mind when he penned the poetical protest against the place where they buried his brother Robert :—

> 'Do his bones repose on his native hills?
> Is his spirit soothed by the dashing rills,
> Where the heather waves, and the free winds come?
> Is this the place of the poet's tomb?
>
> 'No!—
> Nor tree, nor flower, o'er his lowly bed
> Their bright Spring tears, or sere leaves, shed;
> For 'mid countless graves and a city's gloom,
> Sleeps Nature's child in a nameless tomb!'"

III.

ROLL-CALL.

One of the few remaining links which connect the parish of Balmaghie with the distant past is the old Communion Cup. This cup is one of a pair* not any longer used in our Sacramental Service, since two handsome new cups of silver were presented to the parish in 1795, a year after our present church was built, by Thomas Gordon of Balmaghie, the patron of the living.

This very ancient cup, according to Mr Thomas Burns, the author of the learned volume called "Old Scottish Communion Plate," belongs to the very beginning of the seventeenth century, and is probably little short of 300 years old. It is among the oldest cups remaining since the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Only three pre-Reformation cups (called "mazers," grace cups) remain, one being in the possession of the Earl of Galloway, dated 1569. The date of this Balmaghie cup is ascertained by the deacon's mark or punch to the right side of the crest (Edinburgh Castle). The mark is "J. L.," or John Lindsay, who was deacon of the Incorporation of Goldsmiths in Edinburgh in 1617-19. This is therefore the date of the cup. To the left is the maker's monogram "G. K.," Gilbert Kirkwoode, who became

* The other may be seen in the Museum at Kirkcudbright; also, the Balmaghie "Token" for the Sacrament.

deacon in 1624. Mr Burns groups this cup with a number which he calls the "Dumfries Group," where appear three other cups by the same maker, viz.: Glencairn, Tynron, and Penpont, all very similar in shape. In this group are also included the cups at Carsphairn and Kirkcudbright. The letters $_{K}P_{BMG}$ of course stand for Parish Kirk of Bal-M'Ghie. The letters $_{H}M_{M}$ stand for Magister or Minister Hew M'Ghie, who was minister of Balmaghie 1615-1638. The patronage of the living at that time rested with the family of M'Ghie of Balmaghie under a charter of James VI., dated 1606. The church itself was vested in the Bishop of Edinburgh. It is said that when the Abbey of Dundrennan was destroyed, the M'Ghies obtained possession of a large part of the Abbey plate. Perhaps this very cup was made out of silver once used there.

Between the Rev. Hew M'Ghie and our next minister lies a troubled period of 50 years, during which Balmaghie shared the ups and downs of Episcopacy and Presbytery. Finally, in 1688, the Episcopal "curates" were "rabbled" or expelled. The last Bishop of Galloway was John Gordon (1688), who fled to France. Immediately after this the Synod of Galloway met to take stock of the state of the parishes. This meeting was at Minnigaff, May 14, 1689. Many parishes had no minister, and probably Balmaghie was among them. A number of ministers "from Ireland" attended, and some received calls, including a Mr John M'Bride to the parish of Borgue. It was 1694 before Balmaghie secured a pastor in John M'Millan,* the first of

* John Macmillan was appointed by the Presbytery on 9th April, 1695, to help in exorcising the spirit at Ringcroft, in Kells—*vide* Nich. Hist. Tales, p. 18. He did not, however, attend.

that name settled here. Unfortunately, his health broke down, and during his last years he was practically laid aside. Dying in 1700, he lies buried in our churchyard to the left of the large M'Kie monument, with the following inscription on his tomb:—*Here lyes Mr John M'Millan, minister of the Gospel in the Paroch of Balmaghie, who died upon the 26 of July 1700 and of his age 37 and of his Ministrie the 7th year.*

We pass over, meantime, the great John Macmillan, *alter* or second of the name in succession in the parish, who was minister in 1701. We also leave to a future notice his sometime involuntary colleague and successor, William M'Kie, who died in 1763, and is commemorated by a handsome monument. There follows a series of brief pastorates, beginning with David Blenchell, 1764 to 1768, concerning whom there seems nothing special to relate, except that there is no trace of his having been interred in the churchyard. Possibly he was translated—a fate which seldom happened to incumbents of the parish, though not by any means so seldom as in St. Andrews, Fife, whence the ever-interesting A. K. H. B. declares no minister has been translated except to heaven. "This," he adds, "augurs well for the present incumbent."

To David Blenchell succeeded Samuel Martin, of whom an extended notice will be found further on. Mr Martin was translated in 1776 to Monimail, in Fifeshire, where he lies buried.

There followed Philip Morison, whose pulpit Bible is in my care.* Tradition says that in 1803 he retired from the

* See *supra*, page 19.

ministry. That he had suffered family affliction while in the manse appears from the tombstone already noticed.* We may judge from his classical taste that he was a man of some scholarship. The Latin line on the tomb is the sole example of that dead language to be found in the kirkyard, if we except only the couplet on the second Mrs Macmillan,† and such purely formal phrases as *Requiescat in pace* and *Memento Mori*.

James Henderson, who succeeded in 1804, is elsewhere commemorated. He was followed in 1839 by Alexander Gibson, of whom the savoury memory still lingers in our humble cottages. A man of deep and simple piety, he was noted in his brief day for the painstaking character of his pastoral work more than for pulpit gifts. He, like his predecessor, Henderson, was a horseman, and in all sorts of weather (of which Balmaghie can give a varied assortment) he was seen ambling along intent on visitation. Quite recently there died an aged dame who often told with pride how "Mr Gibson, he juist openit the door, and cam ben. And he says, 'Mistress, could ye gie me a cup o' tea?' 'Ay, could I,' says I, 'and that in a jiffey!' 'Jiffey,' says the minister, 'jiffey! whatna thing's that?' And he aye had his joke efterhin' aboot the jiffey. He wid step in wi'—'A've juist come in for a cup o' yer jiffey tea!'" Mr Gibson ran a brief race. In 1846 his health entirely gave way, and he died in Hamilton in that year, tenderly nursed by a devoted wife, who still resides there at an advanced age, and has been a constant benefactor of the parish. Mr Gibson was buried in

* See page 32.

† *Vivit post funera virtus, Pietas super astra resurget.*

Hamilton, but his widow placed in the church here the marble tablet noticed in my account of the interior.*

The empty manse was soon occupied by a different type of pastor. William Freeland, M.D., a native of Ireland, was translated here from the chapel of ease in Dumfries, which has since grown into the fine and prosperous S. Mary's. Unfortunately he was in 1853 deposed by the General Assembly, it is said on somewhat slender evidence. He had previously succeeded in rousing in some of his parishioners a violent dislike, while others cherished for him an equally strong attachment. Dr. Freeland was, as became an Irishman, a man of very genial nature and sociable habits, indulging, indeed, a freedom of speech not usual among the clergy. He was a most fluent extemporaneous preacher, and is said to have frequently chosen his text in the pulpit and delivered himself without any premeditation. On his deposition, he removed to the United States of America, where he applied for admission to the American Episcopal Church. This was about to be granted, when a communication reached the Bishop from Scotland, and the application was refused. He died in his exile, and nothing is known here as to his resting-place. His deposition inflicted a severe wound on the religious life of the parish. Even yet, the scar may be traced wherever a light and disrespectful tone is heard regarding the holy ministry.

The patron of the parish, Admiral Gordon of Balmaghie, now presented a very young man to the vacant cure. William Lyon Riach, M.A., entered Balmaghie as his first ministerial charge in 1853, and at once won "golden

* See Page 27.

opinions from all sorts of men." The church soon became well attended. It is said that people came from all parts of the county to hear the young preacher. His fame at last reached the ears of Lady Ruthven, who had the patronage of a parish then vacant—that of Pencaitland. She travelled specially to Balmaghie to see and hear for herself, and the result was that Mr Riach in 1855 was translated to Pencaitland, amid the profound regrets of his people in Balmaghie. Mr Riach was not long permitted to remain in Pencaitland, but was speedily translated once more, this time to a charge in Edinburgh, which ultimately grew into the large and handsome pile of buildings known as the Grange Parish Church. Mr Riach still lives and labours in Edinburgh, and to the people of Balmaghie he is an object of much interest as being one of two surviving ministers of the parish.

The last incumbent presented under the system of private patronage was Thomas Stevenson, 1855-1881. He was transferred from his sphere as assistant-minister at Lochrutton, in Dumfriesshire, to be minister of Balmaghie. Although then 56 years of age, he completed here a ministry of 26 years more, dying in 1881 at the advanced age of 82. A handsome granite column, erected by his widow, stands in the kirkyard, but at a great distance from the "Ministers' Corner." During his ministry the church received some much-needed repairs.

Of the present incumbent, ordained 29th January, 1882, modesty of course forbids any detailed account. But it is not improper to record here, in concluding the Roll-call of our ministers in Balmaghie, that the period since 1882 has been fruitful in changes connected with the church and

its services. In 1882 the congregation assembled in what was little better than a whitewashed barn, though many helpful hours of devotion were spent within its unadorned walls. In 1895 the congregation have the free use of a church, not only seemly and comfortable, but even in some respects beautiful. In 1882 we sat to sing (which few did at all), and stood up at prayers. Now, we stand at praise, and many join heartily; and in time of prayer we reverently sit with bowed heads. In 1882 there was no hymnbook, choir, or harmonium—all these have been the gain of the passing years. In these respects we have simply kept time with the whole Church of Scotland. A great future lies before that Church, and every part of it. The universal enthusiasm for finer buildings and more worthy church service portends coming changes which it would be rash to attempt to predict. In a parish like Balmaghie, so steeped as it is in Covenanting memories, it is peculiarly striking to study the gradual growth of a larger and finer taste in worship and in religious expression. To some, we may seem to be pouring "new wine into old bottles." In reality, I believe, we are pouring back the old wine into the old bottles. We are reviving and restoring the true spirit of the Scottish National Church.

A final note, summing up in one aspect the facts presented above in our Roll-call. Between 1694 and 1881 we have had 11 ministers, being an average of one minister for every 17 years. If, however, we deduct two ministers deposed and two translated, we raise the average duration of the pastorate to about 25 years. The *longest* pastorate was that of William M'Kie, 52 years. The *shortest* was that of Mr Riach, 2½ years.

IV.

AN EPISODE IN GALLOWAY.*

THE publication of a "History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church," by the Rev. Mr Hutchison of New Cumnock, will draw attention anew to the curious drama of Spiritual Independence, played out in a remote Galloway parish in 1703-1729. Most Scotsmen have heard of the sect called Macmillanites, and better known as Cameronians or Reformed Presbyterians. But few at the present time are aware that they derived the former name from the minister of an obscure and thinly-peopled parish in the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright. The parish of Balmaghie, where Macmillan made his stern stand against the State, is situated about three miles from Castle-Douglas, and includes an area of about sixty square miles. The diminutive church can be seen, with the homely manse at its side, perched on a small eminence on the banks of the Dee, opposite Crossmichael station on the Portpatrick Railway.

The traveller who will look out of his railway carriage at that station sees a broad sheet of water, which at first seems to be a loch, but is really the swollen and sluggish river. In one corner of this, large quantities of fine eels used to be caught. Exactly opposite the station, with this mimic lake

* History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. By Rev. Matthew Hutchison, New Cumnock. Paisley: J. & R. Parlane, 1893.

THOMAS STEVENSON.

between, is Balmaghie Church, a small cruciform edifice having a picturesque belfry and pointed arches. The present church and manse are only 100 years old, but a fragment still remains of the old church in which Macmillan for some years set at defiance the whole power of Church and State. The ancient church is represented by a small portion of the eastern gable, into which had been built an imposing monument to the memory of Macmillan's successor.

John Macmillan, born at Barncauchlaw,* in Minnigaff Parish, in 1669, took his M.A. degree at Edinburgh, where he also completed his theological studies. While a student he joined what were known as the "Societies," being associations of churchmen who claimed a larger spiritual freedom than was then enjoyed by the Church of Scotland. Upon entering the Divinity Hall, he left them, and, after being licensed by the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, he was for a short time chaplain in the family of Mr Murray of Broughton. In 1701 he became minister at Balmaghie, succeeding another John Macmillan, whose latter years had been darkened by chronic sickness. The parish was therefore in a neglected state, but Macmillan soon roused it effectually.

Macmillan's connection with the "Societies" had left a deep influence on his mind. He was not long settled in his new office before his restless spirit found vent in a formal "statement of grievances," presented by him to his Presbytery in July, 1703. In this action he was joined

* On the *Hassock* of ground granted by Robert Bruce to Widow Amabel, whose three sons, M'Kie, Murdoch, and M'Lurg, became his henchmen. It includes Risk, Larg, and Machermore.

by two co-presbyters, Mr Reid of Carsphairn and Mr Tod of Buittle. This paper complained that the Solemn League and Covenant was ignored, and the divine right of Presbytery allowed to fall into the background; also, that certain political oaths were imposed on the clergy, and in other ways that the Church's freedom was invaded by the State. The Presbytery appointed a committee to answer these complaints, consisting of Messrs Warner at Balmaclellan, Telfer at Rerrick, Cameron at Kirkcudbright, Boyd at Dalry, Ewart at Kells, and Monteith at Borgue. Ultimately the Presbytery passed a resolution that, "being desirous to be as condescending as they can, for peace sake they do pass all bygone differences and misbehaviours of said John Macmillan." But they added, that if he still continued to be "turbulent and divisive," then "all former things now passed from shall be revived, and he censured for them, with such new offences as shall be found just." These "former things" included Macmillan's action in causing his people to renew the Solemn League at a congregational fast, and also in refusing to recognise the oath of allegiance to Queen Anne.

After this decided rebuke, Macmillan ceased to attend his Presbytery, who thereupon dealt with him once more, and exacted a promise to attend and be submissive. But such promises were no better than "withs" to bind this ecclesiastical Samson. He soon publicly disowned his pledge, and the Presbytery then resolved to hold a visitation at Balmaghie. Before this could take place, however, a libel was drawn up and duly served upon him. He was charged with breach of faith and with turbulent conduct, but no averment was made against his life or doctrine.

Mr Hutchison is of opinion that the whole movement arose from the Presbytery's dislike to the agitation for spiritual independence which Macmillan was keeping alive.

On a bleak day in December, 1703, the Presbytery met in Balmaghie Church to lead proof, when a petition from the people against their procedure was handed in, and Macmillan finally declined their authority, appealing to the "first free and lawful" General Assembly. Next day, 29th December, they met at Crossmichael Church, placing the broad waters of the Dee between them and the stubborn pastor and people of Balmaghie. Macmillan did not appear; the libel was found proven; and on a vote taken, "suspend or depose," it was unanimously agreed to depose him, which was at once done. Mr Monteith of Borgue and Mr Hay of Anwoth were ordered to declare the Church vacant on Sunday, 6th January, 1704.

Now came the "tug of war." Mr Monteith vainly endeavoured to carry out his orders. On 22nd February, 1704, he reported to the Presbytery that, accompanied by a notary public and some witnesses, he was riding to the church at Balmaghie when "there came from the kirkyard about 20 or 30 men, who refused to let him go further, and actually stopped them by laying hold on the foremost horse's bridle." He thereupon read out the sentence of deposition and declared the church vacant, taking instruments in the hands of the notary, and so rode disconsolately home to Borgue. On the way, however, he stopped at Balmaghie House, and preached there to a small gathering. Macmillan himself occupied the pulpit of the parish church.

The first blow had thus been struck in the war between Macmillan and the Church Courts. Active hostilities ensued. At first, indeed, he hesitated to enter on a course of open rebellion. Twice he appealed to the Assembly, and under the prospect of being reponed he permitted for a season the pulpit of the church to be filled by the Presbytery's "supplies," as in a regular vacancy. But his patience was soon exhausted. One Sunday the officiating minister intimated the "supply" for next Lord's Day and exhorted the people to attend better than they had been doing. Macmillan, who was, as usual, present, got up and intimated that he intended to preach himself next Sunday.

"What!" said the officiating minister, "will you, a deposed man, go and preach?" Turning to the congregation, he added—"Go home, and mourn for it, that a deposed man is going to preach. I wish he may get few hearers."

Next Sunday Macmillan entered the pulpit. The church was packed. As the bell began ringing a boat had been seen coming across the Dee. It contained the Presbytery "supply." Immediately a rush was made to the bank, and a dozen strong arms pushed the boat away from the landing-place. Such were the amenities of Church life in Balmaghie in 1705.

After this exciting scene Macmillan continued to occupy pulpit and manse as if no sentence of deposition had been pronounced. The arm of "Cæsar" was therefore invoked by the Church. The Commission of Assembly in 1706 appealed to the heritors to persuade the offending minister to give up the keys of the vacant church to the Presbytery. The attempt was made, but in vain. Macmillan continued

to ignore the authority of the Church Courts, and his parishioners generally adhered to him, although their conduct exposed them to fines and imprisonment.

The Town Records of Kirkcudbright show that the Town Council had before them in 1707 a petition from Charles Livingstone, glover, burgess in Kirkcudbright, praying to be relieved of a fine of 500 merks, or about £28, inflicted upon him because he had been married by Mr Macmillan. Livingstone pleads the "scarcitie of money," the frequency of such irregularities since the Revolution, and his own previous good conduct. We are glad to find the Council remitted the fine.

Another remarkable scene now took place near the church. In 1708, on an application by the Presbytery, "craving the benefit of law to put Macmillan out of his hot nest," the Lords in Council at Dumfries sent the Sheriff with 100 yeomanry to expel the contumacious minister. The people, however, assembled in such numbers that the Sheriff was obliged to retire.

At length steps were taken to institute a new minister, and Mr William M'Kie was duly called, and arrangements made for his ordination. The ordination took place on 12th October, 1710, seven years after the deposition of Macmillan. The formal proceedings prior to this had not been uneventful. Mr Cameron of Kirkcudbright, a brother of the famous Richard Cameron who fell at Airsmoss, had been sent to preach in Balmaghie Church, but he got no farther than the parish boundary. At Barnboard a body of Macmillanites unceremoniously turned him back. Eighty-seven heads of families, representing probably half the population, petitioned against

Mr M'Kie's settlement, and craved that Macmillan might be reponed. The Presbytery, however, stood firm, and the new minister was ordained.

The next act in this curious drama was long remembered among the gossips of the parish. The new minister arrived at the manse, but was denied admittance. He then attempted to have the glebe ploughed, but the indignant neighbours rose, and drove off his supporters. They "cut the reins in pieces, turned the horses adrift, and threw the ploughshares into the adjoining lake." One infuriated dame aimed a deadly blow at the minister's throat with a reaping-hook. He put up his gloved hand to ward it off, and his fingers were cut to the bone. The conflict had thus nearly cost human life, and actual blood had been shed.

Mr M'Kie, a pacific and prudent man, withdrew and took up his abode in a gentleman's house about three miles off. A meeting-house, called in contempt "The House of Rimmon," was built for him. He married, and till 1729 quietly pursued his sacred calling side by side with the redoubtable Macmillan. The latter continued to live in the manse and occupy the parish pulpit; he cultivated the glebe and generally exercised the functions of a parish minister. It was the Papal Schism on a small scale! And it caused some strange complications, such as that of the "Twice-Christened Bairn,"* familiar to all lovers of Galloway lore.

* See page 77.

V.

"THE END OF THAT MAN."

IN a plain house at Bothwell, called Broomhill, a venerable old man lay dying one winter's day in 1753. It was the last day of November, a month which begins with All Saints, and ends with S. Andrew. Although dying so far off from his first and most beloved home, this aged saint was John Macmillan, *alter* or second of the name in succession in the Galloway parish of Balmaghie. It is a fact worthy of passing note, that the first preacher of Christianity in this parish was named Andrew, and came from the neighbouring church in Ireland. Thus, on S. Andrew's day, his distant successor was slowly "crossing the bar." Friends were around his bed, silently witnessing the death of a faithful Christian pastor. It was a worn-out frame, exhausted by eighty-four busy years, which reposed on the bed. The eye was dim, and the natural force abated. Time had been when John Macmillan's voice had rung out, clear and firm, over the heads of devout multitudes gathered in the open air. All over Galloway, and in Ayrshire, the Lothians, and Fife, he had tramped about in every kind of weather to visit and comfort the scattered flock of Covenanters. And now he was going on a last journey, ending in eternal peace. The aged limbs were already straightened out, the wrinkled

hands folded on his breast. For some time his eyes had been closed. Suddenly he opened them, and looked out from his dying body upon the faces around. A friendly ear was placed at his lips, and heard his last words—"My Lord, my God, my Redeemer—yea, mine own God is He!"

It was a solemnly beautiful deathbed, and it had been preceded by a life of equally austere and solemn beauty. It is common among unthinking readers to look upon our Scottish Covenanters as being generally men of a harsh and unlovely mould, strangers to family affections and brotherly friendships. Macmillan's public life bore out only too well such an unfavourable impression. From the first year of his ministry in Balmaghie, the year 1701, he held himself conscientiously bound to set a face of granite, hard as his native rock in Galloway, against the defections of the Church of the Revolution. For him, brought up from boyhood in the strictest Covenanting circles, the true and only Covenant was that of 1643, known as the *Solemn League*, which not only pledged its adherents to defend and maintain the Presbyterian Church, but also asserted the duty of imposing Presbyterian views, by force if need be, on all the British realms. To Macmillan, Popery and Prelacy were things with which no communion, whether sacred or secular, ought to be permitted. Presbytery was a divine institution, and as such must be vindicated as the exclusive form of national religion. All other forms were not merely mixed with error; they were absolutely wrong, and must be firmly suppressed, or at least discountenanced. We must try to get into the soul of an earnest if, perhaps, narrow man, who could, as a child, remember the "killing year," 1685, and had perhaps

himself seen Lagg's dragoons scouring the fields around Minnigaff. We must imagine the growth of his intense feeling of hatred for a religious form which had sought to drive people to church by such means. And we must finally conceive this ardent and obstinate nature, nurtured amid scenes of oppression and suffering for conscience sake, realising the compromise which his Church accepted in 1690—the "Revolution Settlement" of the Church of Scotland. No doubt a Protestant sat on the throne, and Presbyterianism was fully secured in Scotland; but in England, Prelacy received an equal support, and in Ireland, Romanism was granted a large toleration. Even in Scotland, the General Assembly could not meet or dissolve without royal mandate. To the older Covenanters, this seemed a heavy fall from the hopes which they had cherished. In their disappointment some of them, like Hepburn at Urr, even proposed to unfurl the blue flag of the Covenant, and bid armed defiance to an Erastian and time-serving Government. Others, like our own Macmillan, contented themselves at first with emphatic protests against sinful compliance in any form with the reigning power, and with sedulous pastoral training of the people in their parishes in the tenets of the Covenanting theology. We cannot wonder, if such stress of conscience, and daily friction with the established order in Church and State, moulded the man's outward shape into something of sternness and bigotry.

But it would be a great mistake to think of Macmillan as a mere angry and obstinate bigot. Fortunately we possess proofs that, while faithful to his Covenanting views to the last, he showed throughout a spirit of sympathy and

tolerance by no means frequent among his colleagues, and, indeed, condemned by them more than once. Taking first his public life in Balmaghie and elsewhere, we find that after the first fiery rupture with his Presbytery in 1703, issuing in a sentence of deposition pronounced at Crossmichael Church, Macmillan next year made submission to the Commission of General Assembly, and afterwards to his Presbytery. He expressed "hearty sorrow" for not attending their meetings, and for "declining" their jurisdiction; and he humbly begged that he might be reponed. Meantime he would refrain from preaching. Accordingly, he did remain silent for about a year, but, despairing at last of redress, he one day rose up in church at the close of a service conducted by the Presbytery's delegate, and intimated that he would himself preach next Sunday. From that day he continued his public ministry, which was entirely agreeable to the parishioners. And it was 26 years after his deposition before he finally retired, amid universal expressions of regret, from the quaint little manse and church on the banks of our Dee. We do not for a moment defend Macmillan's retention of the ecclesiastical buildings and glebe. The stipend, of course, he could not hold in the same way. But we may surely find a palliation of his offence in the fact, that he seems to have done nothing positively to hinder his successor's work, beyond keeping him out of the manse and church. And when he left Balmaghie, in 1729, he did so not from compulsion, since the authorities had ceased to disturb him, but solely in order the better to tend a much larger and wider flock—to become, in fact, the Bishop of a great diocese stretching from Galloway to Fife.

More positive tokens of Macmillan's superior tolerance are seen in the fact, that he kept up brotherly communion with the elders of Balmaghie long after he had become fully associated with the "United Societies" of Covenanters, to whom such fellowship was a thing entirely sinful. Further, he permitted himself to be married (for the third time) by a parish minister; which also was a grievous "defection" in Covenanting eyes. And perhaps the most striking fact for us, in these days of changing discipline as regards baptism, is that he was severely censured for baptizing the children of persons who were not themselves members of the Covenanting Societies. In reference to these points, the historian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church says that they "arose from his desire to give a more liberal interpretation to, and application of, the principles of the Testimony, and to infuse a more charitable feeling towards others around."* Such a view throws pleasing light on a character which, to his own Presbytery and to later students of his life, has sometimes seemed best described by the old Scottish word "*dour*." "Dour," in some measure, Macmillan must have been. What Scotsman who has dared any good thing for Scotland but has been more or less "dour?" But Macmillan's whole effect on the stern religionists, over whom at last he became the revered head, was a softening and broadening one. Especially he fostered works of kindly helpfulness, and, as early as 1719, we read of one of the meetings at which he took part. . . . "Upon a petition given in by a poor, infirm man in Galloway, the meeting thought fit to make a

* Hutchison's History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1893, p. 170.

collection for him, and to recommend his necessitous case to others in fellowship."

Turning now to the less public life of this great man, we might linger for hours over its records of quiet, pastoral usefulness. Is it not a crowning proof of Macmillan's lovable nature that the whole people (with but a few exceptions) of Balmaghie stood by him for 26 years after he had been solemnly deposed? True, at times a section in a Scottish parish will cling to a deposed minister for a time, even if they deem him guilty of gross misconduct. But that is only the result of Scottish loyalty and chivalrous backing of a losing cause. Here there was no question of moral misconduct at all, and the entire congregation may be said to have continued to Macmillan their perfect confidence and obedience. When his successor was ordained in 1710, only 9 parishioners signed his call, while 87 heads of houses, besides young men, protested against it. In 1843 it would have been said that they had "vetoed" it. It was a pastoral life of singular faithfulness, and a family life of peculiar piety, which riveted these loving bonds for ever between Macmillan and the people of Balmaghie, and excited such a fervent devotion that more than once they risked fines and imprisonment to protect their beloved minister. The parish of Balmaghie was covenanting to the core at this time. It preserved, with sacred care, the remains of George Short, and of the "two Davids Hallidays," both shot down on the wild moorlands on its borders. The visitor to the lonely churchyard may still read how

> "One name, one cause, one grave, one heaven do ty
> Their souls to that one God eternally."

Little wonder that, with a minister such as Macmillan, and only a generation distant from such bloody scenes, these people were not afraid to resort to force in resisting, as they believed, the old prelatic foe. But we pass from these rude outbursts of a sore and embittered zeal. Macmillan himself, both in Balmaghie and throughout his larger parish (or diocese, as we should perhaps call it), was such a minister as men to-day still sigh for, and would still at fit season be ready to die for. He was an incessant visitor, not for gossip or social pleasure, but for prayer and catechising. Like his covenanting forbears, he often, and for a time always, preached in the fields, or in houses and barns. For thirty-seven years he did his heavy work quite unassisted, save in those parts which an unordained minister (a layman, in fact) could perform. The Holy Sacraments, indeed, became specially dear when dispensed by John Macmillan. Mothers eagerly sought to have his kindly hands laid on their babes, even when the father chose rather a regular minister to give baptism. Is it not a proof of Macmillan's real lovableness, that they "brought little children unto him," as the mothers of Salem long before to his gentle Master? And the Lord's Supper in his hands became a rite most searching, solemn, and strengthening to the soul. The very cup used by him at last gained an almost superstitious value as a test of the worthy communicant. We have seen and handled that cup often; but the virtue is departed with the prophet-soul of Macmillan. In his own home, we can catch but faint glimpses of the good minister; but we know now that he was three times married, and brought up a numerous offspring, of whom one at least was held

worthy to be joined in his ministry. To this very hour, his descendants speak of him lovingly as "old Balmaghie." They cherish his Family Bible and his antique seal-ring. One of them has commemorated him in Balmaghie Church. Another is diligently collecting the family memorials. The Reformed Presbytery, which he founded in 1743, has enshrined his name in more than one temple for the worship of God.* That body for long was known as the Macmillanite Church. Stern and unyielding he may have been where he thought conscience bade him be so, but in himself he was a fine and noble character, hewn out of the Galloway rock, and with the kindly perfume of the heather and the peat clinging to his very soul.

* *e.g.*, the Macmillan Free Church, Castle-Douglas.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V.

Note 1.—Last Words of the Reverend Mr John Macmillan, on his Death-bed, November, 1753.—" . . . Prayer being ended, he inquired where that word was, 'Yea, mine own God is He?" and being told it was the last line of the xlii. Psalm in metre, he caused the verse to be read, and said, 'Yes, I know and am assured of it—yea, mine own God is He.' He then complained he had no feeling in the little finger of the left hand. Another went to perform worship, and he ordered to sing in the xci. Psalm to the tenth verse; and caused read the four last verses of the xcii. Psalm.

"After prayer was over, being now past midnight, he said he thought he had no feeling in the left hand, so sensible was he of life departing from the extremities of his body. Upon which, it being said to him, that as he had been desirous of his departure and to be ever with the Lord, so it seemed to be evident that the time of his change was at hand, he cheerfully replied that he could welcome the King of Terrors, as a messenger sent from his Heavenly Father, to bring him to the mansions of glory, and added, 'Lord, I have waited for Thy Salvation.' . . .

"The last words which he was heard to speak, within a few minutes of his last breath, were, 'My Lord, my God, my Redeemer, yea, mine own God is He;' and the few minutes remaining after he ceased speaking, he was observed to be in a praying and praising disposition. And after he had fully finished his course, with a pleasant countenance, his eyes lifted up, and his right hand a little raised up to heaven, he willingly resigned up his soul to his beloved and faithful Saviour. . , .

"Thus comfortably and joyfully he resigned his soul to God, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, on Saturday, the 20th day of November (o.s.), 1753. . . ."

From a very rare pamphlet—"Observations on a Wolf in a Sheepskin," published 1753, and written by C. U., *i.e.* Charles Umpherston, surgeon in Pentland. See *Reformed Presbyterian Magazine*, vol. for 1871, page 279.

Note 2.—Macmillan's Epitaph in Dalserf.—The monument, which is about to be repaired, is four-square, and has the following inscriptions :—

East Side.—A public tribute to the memory of the Rev. John Macmillan, minister of Balmaghie in Galloway, and afterwards first minister to the United Societies in Scotland, adhering at the Revolution to the whole Covenanted Reformation in Britain and Ireland, attained between 1638 and 1649. An exemplary Christian: a devoted minister; and a faithful witness to the Cause of Christ: died December First, 1753, aged eighty-four.

Look unto Abraham your father; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him.—Isa. li. 2.

North Side.—Mr Macmillan acceded to the Societies in 1707. The Reformed Presbytery was constituted in 1743; and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland in 1811.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.—1 Sam. vii. 12.

South Side.—Erected at the grave of Mr Macmillan by the Inhabitants of the surrounding Country of all denominations, who testified their respect to his much venerated memory, by attending and liberally contributing, at a Sermon Preached on the spot, September eighth, 1839, by the Rev. A. Symington, D.D., Paisley.

Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste.—Nehemiah ii. 3.

West Side.—Mr Macmillan was succeeded in the ministry by his son, the Rev. John Macmillan of Sandhills, near Glasgow, who died February Sixth, 1808, aged seventy-nine; aud by his grand-son, the Rev. John Macmillan, of Stirling, who died October Twentieth, 1818, aged sixty-eight. These preached the same Gospel, and ably advocated the same public cause, adorning it with their lives, and bequeathing to it their Testimony and the Memory of the Just.

Instead of thy fathers should be thy children. — Psalm xli. 16.

THE DEE BELOW BALMAGHIE KIRK.

Note 3.—Macmillan's Family and Descendants.—Macmillan married first Jean Gemble, died 1711, aged 31, by whom he had no issue.

Macmillan next married the widow of Edward Goldie of Craigmuie, who was a daughter of Sir Alexander Gordon of Earlston. She died 1723, aged 43.

Macmillan married, thirdly, Grace Russell, in 1725 or thereabout, by whom he had five children, viz. :—

(1) Josias, born 1726, "upon a Sabbath morning about six o'clock," at Balmaghie Manse; died Feb. 7, 1740,aged 13.

(2) Kathren, born 1727; died Feb. 17, 1736, aged 8.

(3) John, born 1729.

(4) Grizel, born 1731.

(5) Alexander Jonita, born 1734; died same year, aged 6 months.

Josias, Kathren, and Jonita (Janet), are buried in Dalserf, and their gravestone, partially mutilated, is built into the platform of their father's monument as before described. The inscription is as follows :—

Here lyes the Corps
of Kathr
Jannet M'Millan,
daughters of the
Reverint Mr Joh . .
M'Millan, Minister
of the Gospel.
. . . Jo. . . .

Grizel Macmillan married John Galloway of Sandyhills, near Glasgow, and had issue two sons and one daughter, Elizabeth, who married John Grieve, surgeon in Inverkeithing.

John Galloway dying in 1764, his widow, Grizel Macmillan or Galloway, married the Rev. John Thorburn, Reformed Presbyterian minister in Pentland. She died in 1767, leaving an infant girl.

Andrew and William Galloway, great-grandsons, restored the Macmillan stone in Balmaghie churchyard in 1843.

John Macmillan II. married twice, and had by his first marriage six children, and by his second no less than twelve. One of his daughters married Rev. Thomas Rowatt, Scaurbridge Cameronian Church, Penpont. The youngest son of this marriage became an

ironmonger and farmer at Newton-Stewart, which he left for Edinburgh. He died in 1880. A son of his, Thomas Rouet, Esq., still survives, and is in possession of his great-great-grandfather's seal-ring, with crest and motto.

From John Grieve, the first husband of Grizel Macmillan, descends another surviving great-great-grandson, John Grieve, M.D., Glasgow.

Note 4.—Macmillans in Churchyard.—There is a remarkable number of Macmillans interred in Balmaghie churchyard. It may be interesting to subjoin a list, as complete as I can make it, after careful search:—

Macmillans buried at Balmaghie.

1. Rev. John M'Millan, died 1700, and his wife Catherine Williamson, died 1700.
2. Jane M'Millan, spouse of John M'Meiken, died 1859, aged 93.
3. Grisel M'Millan, spouse to James M'Cartney, died 1746, aged 66.
4. Agnes M'Millan, "the disconsolate widow of a Christian and affectionate husband," died 1805, aged 93. Her husband was Alexander M'Cartney, died at Campdouglas, 1774, aged 64. Their daughter, Jane M Cartney, died 1829, aged 79.
5. Agnes M'Millan, wife of Wm. M'Gowan, died 1793, aged 78.
6. Wm. M'Millan, merchant in Castle-Douglas, died 1824, aged 76.
7. Samuel M'Millan, his son, died 1807, aged 18.
8. Alexander Macmillan, in Castle-Douglas, died 1838, aged 78.
9. Samuel Macmillan, his son, died 1843, aged 48. He married Margaret Hannah, and three daughters, Margaret, Mary, and Annie, are here interred along with her.

I have failed to trace the relationship—if any—to the great Macmillan, or to each other. I conjecture that Grisel M'Millan, born 1680, may have been a daughter of John M'Millan, the first minister of that name. I have not succeeded in determining any relationship between the two ministers. Perhaps they were cousins. There was a John M'Millan in Barend in 1772, apparently a very old, and certainly a very poor, man, as he was reckoned not "good" for one pound sterling. He might have been a brother of Grisel, but no gravestone contains his name.

VI.

"THE HOUSE OF RIMMON."

IT was a dark and cold day in December, 1703, when the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright opened a memorable sitting in Crossmichael Church. It wanted but two days to the New Year, a time of friendship and kindliness in Scotland. But the Presbytery's business was little in harmony with that kindly season. They were met to deliberate on the case of John Macmillan, *alter* or second of the name in succession as minister at Balmaghie, just across the dark water, half-frozen at that time. And their decision was soon arrived at. The Presbytery were tired of Macmillan's persistent testimony in favour of the higher Covenanting doctrines. They had reason to complain of him also as an absentee from their meetings, in spite of distinct injunctions on their part that he should attend. Such absence is not uncommon in our time, and would not be construed by any reasonable man as contumacious. But Presbytery meetings in those days were serious religious functions. At every one of them a passage of Scripture was prescribed for one of the ministers to open up, and prayer and praise formed a leading part in the business. At present the devotional element has dwindled to a short opening prayer. There is no attempt at praise, and no reading of Holy Scripture, much less any exposition of its teaching. The Synods and General Assembly still adhere to the Church's ancient order

in this matter; a sermon is still delivered by the Moderator, and praise and prayer are observed. But the Presbytery has gradually lost its devotional character, and, along with this, it has lost that solemn claim for regular attendance which was enforced upon John Macmillan. And one does not now-a-days feel surprised that some excellent ministers and elders should be rarely seen there. "I go into the Presbytery a Christian man," said an eminent living divine; "I leave it a raging devil!" "I went but once to a Presbytery," said a stout old Cameronian to me, "and I wished that I had stayed at home. 'Are ministers like yon?' I speired at another old elder; 'siccan conduct astonishes me!' 'Hoot,' said he, 'gin ye had attendit Presbyteries as lang as I hae done, ye would be astonished at naething!'"

Without detailing the charges against Macmillan, we note the gloomy scene in Crossmichael Church, as minuted in the Presbytery books. "The Presbytery"—so runs the minute—"after again solemn calling on God for direction and countenance, by two of the brethren nominated by them, do put the matter to the vote—suspend or depose the said Mr John Macmillan, minister of Balmaghie—and it was carried by an unanimous vote, depose." And this stern sentence was immediately put in force. Across the water, Macmillan perhaps was in his study, bearing his own burden. Conscious though he might be of purest motives and strongest zeal for the Church, he must have been more than human not to feel bowed down by this heavy condemnation of his brethren.

The next scene is hardly less gloomy. It was the ordination day of Macmillan's successor. Again it was

a wintry sky under which the Presbytery met. Nearly seven years had passed since they had deposed Macmillan, yet he still occupied the manse, and preached in the little church on the hill. Nearly the entire parish adhered to his ministry. Every effort made to remove him had failed, and more than one riot had taken place when force was attempted. The proposal to call a new minister had been resisted at every stage by the people of Balmaghie. A protestation against his settlement, signed by Hugh Mitchell and others, had been laid before the Presbytery. A petition craving that Macmillan might be reponed had also been given in, and it bore the signatures of almost every head of a household in the parish. In spite of this determined opposition, both by legal and by illegal means, the Presbytery held on their way, and sustained a call to William M'Kie. And now they were met to ordain him as minister of Balmaghie; but not in the parish church, as the law required, since they were forcibly excluded. They assembled at Kirkcudbright, and there the solemn service was observed, which was declared to unite William M'Kie to the people of Balmaghie as their pastor. This was on October 12, 1710. A dramatic element was furnished by the sudden appearance of Macmillan himself, bearing a written paper which he desired should be read at once. The Presbytery, however, declined to have it read until it had been carefully examined by a committee, and thereupon Macmillan "took instruments in the clerk's hands and so went off."

What William M'Kie's private thoughts and feelings were during this scene we can only conjecture. At this time he was 31 years old, and quite capable of compre-

hending how serious the charge of a parish in such a state of revolt must be. I believe, also, that he was no stranger to Balmaghie itself. It seems quite likely that he was a native of the parish, perhaps a distant relation of the chief family, that of M'Ghie. We find record on a gravestone that a M'Ghie married as his second wife Agnes, a daughter of the Rev. William M'Kie. Knowing the parish well, he must have had some "fear and trembling" as he took his ordination vows. And his apprehensions proved to be well grounded. He entered his parish, according to the old tradition, protected by a file of dragoons, some of whom might, perhaps, have assisted at the shooting of the "Davids Hallidays" twenty-five years before. And it was a bare entrance, and little more. When he penetrated as far as the glebe (since manse and church remained closed to him), he found an infuriated mob awaiting him, and his life was nearly sacrificed in the struggle which ensued. Like the prudent and pacific man he was, he quietly gave way, retiring to a "hired house" in apostolic fashion. To this home he brought after a time a faithful helpmeet, who now rests at the foot of his imposing monument, sharing this last couch with husband and children. The few faithful ones who stood by him (there were only nine in all who signed his call) worshipped in some barn-like building, which was hastily run up by a friendly heritor, perhaps the reigning M'Ghie of Balmaghie. Hardly had it been opened for service, when the quick-witted people gave it a name, never since forgotten. They dubbed it "The House of Rimmon," and I doubt not that unsavoury comparisons were added connected with the Syrian Naaman. M'Kie, however,

regarded this little, and pursued his even way for nineteen years, quitely biding his time.

Where the "House of Rimmon" was situated, is a question now impossible, I fear, to answer. M'Kie's dwelling is described in a contemporary document as "lying hard by." My own theory (and it is a theory and nothing more) is that this dwelling stood where the cottage called Braefoot is now standing. In that case, the temporary church must have been somewhere near Glenlochar Bridge.

The nineteen years spent here were not free from trial, although M'Kie showed much prudence in his professional conduct. The riot on the glebe took place on 9th December, 1713, and was reported to the Presbytery as follows:—"A delation was made, that Mr William M'Kie, minister of the Gospel at Balmaghie, had been most inhumanly and barbarously treated, abused, wounded, and beaten, and had his clothes torn by a rabble of the irregular people in that parish." Orders were at once given to set the law in motion against the offenders, under the notorious Porteous Act, but the authorities showed little energy in the matter. On 5th April, 1715, M'Kie reported that nothing had been done to punish "William Murdoch and other of his accomplices in the barbarous riot," and the Presbytery appointed a committee, consisting of the ministers of Kelton and Crossmichael, along with M'Kie himself, to send a letter to the defaulting Sheriff, threatening, if he continued inactive, to report his negligence to the Lords of Justiciary. Whether this step produced the desired result, we are not told; but the fact remains that Macmillan kept manse, church, and glebe for fourteen

years more, and only retired in M'Kie's favour when his growing work elsewhere summoned him away to Dalserf.

It may be conjectured that gradually M'Kie's tact and faithful discharge of all permitted duties as a pastor, won upon many of Macmillan's own adherents, and helped to bring about his final removal. In any case, the year 1729 saw the rightful minister established in the little manse. He was its last occupant, for a new one was erected in 1764 at his death. Of this last, only a small part still remains, marking the spot where his successors, Blenchell, Martin, and Morison, spent their brief pastorates.

M'Kie had thus been nineteen years ordained to the ministry in Balmaghie before he got possession of the keys of the Church. Providence now hastened to make amends to a truly faithful and good man. He was permitted to enjoy from this date thirty-four peaceful, busy, and useful years as undisputed shepherd of the flock. The real kindliness of the people appeared in the fact that they rallied round him as soon as disturbing causes were removed. They saw that he was no hireling, but a devoted servant of Christ's people. And so, although occasional irregularities (such as the well-known incident of the "Twice-Christened Bairn") occurred, his ministry now went on as smoothly as the Dee water flows along its wide channel. Death also played its part in healing the once bitter wounds and divisions of the parish. Macmillan's chief supporters, one by one, lay down in the kirkyard. We can read some names there, which belonged to men who had raised their hands in anger against the quiet, gentle minister who at last performed their obsequies. William Murdoch, who led the glebe riot in 1713, lies

in an obscure corner, all his fiery passions for ever stilled. Long ere this, he has doubtless been reconciled to the man whom he then reviled and assaulted. It is indeed strange and instructive to read the names on the impassive stones of men who once lived so strenuous a life in their little sphere. As we muse on them and their story, we recognise thankfully that all our parochial quarrels and divisions have one sure end and issue—in this peaceful kirkyard.

> "Their hatred and their love is lost,
> Their envy buried in the dust;
> They have no share in all that's done
> Beneath the circuit of the sun.*

Of M'Kie's actual ministry, we possess no detailed records, but a very slight effort of imagination may help to fill the blank. It is just the most useful Christain work which is least likely to be trumpeted forth in history. The parish under his thoughtful and loving care was quiet, but far from drowsy. M'Kie's epitaph forbids us to suppose that. It shews in every line of the quaint verses, that he had earned the priceless character of being a just man, a man of God, and even a saint. There is a peculiar fragrance and grace in the opening reference to his memory, compared as it is to the perfume of "new-blown roses sweet." Not here alone, but on several other stones, this simple yet beautiful comparison will be found. I have long had a theory about this too—that Balmaghie kirkyard once† abounded in fragrant rose-bushes, although now hardly one blooms on its green mounds. Let us merely note, in passing, that the very next stone to M'Kie's

* Paraphrase 15.

† There are still two or three small rosebushes left.

stately monument, speaks of the "Summer's Rose" and "its balmy gift." And not far off, in a sheltered corner, we read of a Rose which "was pluck't when scarcely grown." No doubt, it is a trite and hackneyed simile, as beseems the homely muse of country folk. Yet it breathes a fine fragrance of gentle affection and regret. And there is something of refreshment to the mind in picturing these weather-stained epitaphs being carved by the workmen while roses bloomed and exhaled their tender essences all around.

I believe that this monument was erected by the parishioners, in which respect it seems to be unique. Never before or since, did the people of Balmaghie honour their pastor by raising a stone to his memory. We have indeed only just succeeded in wiping out a stain from the parochial character in this respect, by the erection of the simple cross which, after fifty-seven years, rescues the grave of James Henderson from "dark oblivion." The fact is notable, and justifies us in believing, that every line of M'Kie's epitaph speaks the truth. His gentle, considerate, and faithful ways had plainly won for him the affection of his people. To them, he is the "much-lov'd Pastor," whose venerable form they recall with mingled reverence and attachment. Concerning his fate, they have no doubt at all. He "is gone home"—he has been transported "to the shore of endless bliss"—he "left this for a better life," so says the monument, and we for our part do not dream of doubting its statement. Concerning poor James Henderson, a man much misunderstood, stories reach me which indicate an inferior degree of certainty on this mysterious point. Galloway is ardent in its attachments,

and equally vehement in its dislikes. And few ministers have been more heartily disliked than he who lies side by side with M'Kie. To-day, we simply note the strange irony which has laid so close together two men—one the most popular and the other the most unpopular, of the pastors of this parish.

M'Kie had a numerous family, many of whom are interred beneath the flat stone at the foot of his monument. There, as we saw, lies his wife. There, too, Nathaniel M'Kie, the humorous and eccentric minister of Cross-michael, reposes at his father's side. Very likely, he made his last journey across the Dee Water, borne up by stalwart arms into this his family tomb. And two parish churches tolled their bells that day as he was laid to rest with the "much-lov'd" parent.

Ten years before M'Kie went to a better life, his old rival and sometime supplanter, Macmillan, had been buried, with the reverence of a great multitude, at Dalserf in Lanarkshire. Though he was the greater man, I doubt if he was the better-loved of these two. One thing is certain, that eighty-six years were allowed to elapse before Macmillan's splendid monument arose. Long ere 1839, the date imprinted on this memorial, loving hands had chiselled out the fine wreathed work on M'Kie's stone, and carefully traced the long and beautiful epitaph. This monument cannot have been erected later than 1794, since it was built into the east end of the old church then demolished. So here, as ever, love conquers all. M'Kie had not the learning or commanding genius of Macmillan; but he had the gentle winning ways which set busy hands in motion to tend a loved one's grave.

When I compare these two men, who were Galloway men to their very marrow, I find in both the characteristic quality of determination, "the stalk of carle-hemp in man," which flourishes in no Scottish province more powerfully than here. But the two men wore this quality with a difference. In Macmillan, it grew under incessant conflict into something like "dourness." In M'Kie, mollified by a temper naturally sweet and placid, it became simply the faculty of not growing weary in well-doing, the habit of steadily applying gentleness and patience to parochial irritations. And so, while I admire and revere Macmillan, I am moved to love M'Kie even as his people did at last. And I lay here on his fragrant tomb my own slight garland of affectionate remembrance, for one who, through fifty-three years, fed his flock like a shepherd, among these green pastures and beside these still waters of his own beloved Dee.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI.

Note 1. — NATHANIEL M'KIE. — At the foot of the M'Kie monument is a "thruch-stone," containing the names of Mary Gordon his wife, and the following children—Robert, John, Grizel, Anna, Ebenezer, Captain George (died 1790), and Rev. Nathaniel M'Kie, minister of Crossmichael (died 1781). This last was the eldest son, and is commemorated as follows :—

NATHANIEL M'KIE'S EPITAPH.

He was kindly, and endowed with ministerial abilities, which he carefully cultivated, and zealously exerted in the service of his Divine Master. His virtues will long live in the memory of his friends.

Nathaniel M'Kie got the present church at Crossmichael built in 1781. He was the maternal uncle of Lowe, author of the well-known poem, "Mary's Dream."

Note 2.—THE TWICE-CHRISTENED BAIRN.—The schism in Balmaghie in the time of Macmillan and M'Kie caused some curious incidents. One of these is described in Nicholson's *Historical and Traditional Tales*, 1843, page 61, under the heading of this note. As many of my readers do not possess Nicholson's volume, I append a large extract from the paper in question :—

"While the tide of religious zeal was running thus high among the good folks of Balmaghie (with what praiseworthy and philosophical coolness they have often taken the matter *since!*) the farm of Ulioch, on the barony of Duchrae, at that time a part of the Castle-Stewart property, was occupied by David Charters and *his wife* Mary Glendinning. David bore the character of being at once an honest, a pious, and a most sagacious man; well to live in the world, come of the old creditable stock of the district—and as the reward of such a constellation of merits, could boast of being, at one and the same time, 'ane elder o' the kirk,' and factor and baron-bailie of the barony of Duchrae. David, no doubt sensible of his own importance, had given way to a little ambition in his *wooing days*—for *his* wife designed herself of 'gentle blude'—but as her father had incurred the displeasure of his family by first marrying,

according to my authority, 'a sweet, sonsy lass below his ain degree,'' and second, by renouncing the 'ancient religion,' Mary's *blude* was the only thing of value which her husband might not have possessed, in any other decent man's daughter, between the Rhonfoot and the Ross of Balmangan. Mary, however, retained no hankering after the faith of her paternal ancestors. On the contrary, though now the almost idolised wife of an elder of the Established Kirk, she in secret became a devoted sympathiser in the fate and doctrines of the still more rigid reformer, M'Millan. It cannot now be ascertained after what fashion the bailie digested the non-conforming principles of his otherwise submissive wife; all that is known amounts to this—that as often as the bailie's avocations led him from home, the old minister paid regular visits to the gudewife, who on safe occasions, failed not, in return, to attend upon his public ministrations. Matters had gone on in this manner for some time—the elder probably winking hard at what he could not effectually check, without a stretch of authority ill suited to the affectionate respect with which he uniformly treated his wife—when an event occurred which at once brought affairs to a crisis.

"It was in the month of May, 1712, that business obliged the bailie to pay a visit to Edinburgh, leaving his wife in a situation above all others the most interesting to a husband's heart and hopes. Being detained longer than he had anticipated, his wife had been safely delivered of a daughter several days before his return. In the meantime, the old minister, anxious to produce a triumphant proof of his influence, if not over the elder himself, at least over his better half, succeeded in persuading her to take a step, of which, it may be safely concluded, she did not soon cease to repent, and which was followed by the almost immediate return of the bailie himself, wholly unconscious of what had taken place in his absence. It was late in the evening when he reached home, and the family had all retired to bed, except one man, who, it being Saturday at e'en, had lingered by the fireside, in expectation of his master's return. 'How's a' here, John?' was the first hurried inquiry of the anxious bailie. 'Ou, gaily,' was John's ready reply. 'How's yer mistress? Eh? Speak out, man.' 'Ou, gaily. She's as weel as can be expectit.' 'What has she gotten? Eh? I say, speak out, man.' 'She's gotten a sonsy lass wean,' quoth John, wishing to put the best face on the matter—for, thus far, no son had crowned the bailie's hopes. 'Thank God even for *a lass!*' exclaimed the affectionate husband;

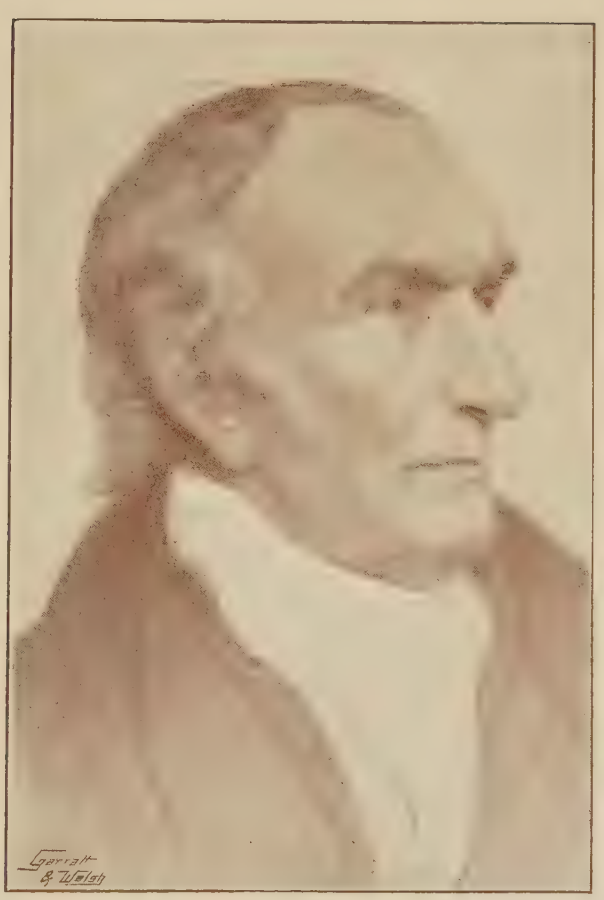
'thank Heaven for a living mother and a living wean, even though it be *a lass*.' So saying, he threw the reins from him, and hurried towards the door. 'Stop a minute, gudeman,' quoth John in a subdued kind of tone; 'it may be as weel, before ye gang ony farther, that ye ken a' aboot it.' 'Ken aboot what, John? What is't ye mean, man?' 'Ou, naething ava,' returned John, 'only'—scratching his head—'only, the minister has been here.' 'Is that a' the mighty affair?' rejoined the bailie. 'What minister do ye mean, though?' added he. '*Mr M'Kie*, I hope?' 'Na, gudeman,' quoth John, 'it was not Mr M'Kie'—and again he came to a dead set. 'It was Mr M'Millan, then?' said the bailie. John said nothing, but hung his head. 'I aye thought ye a man o' sense,' exclaimed the alarmed elder, 'until this blessed night, John. Tell me what means a' this *wull-a-wearin'?* Isna Mr M'Millan still a dispenser o' Christian mercies to *ithers*, although he bena ony langer such to *me?*' 'When ye ken a' aboot it,' quoth John, in a dry, careless manner, 'ye'll maybe think him liberal eneugh o' his dispensations. He has christened yer ain wean, in yer absence, and, I'm opining, without sae muckle as speirin' yer leave.' The bailie was dumbfounded at this piece of intelligence. At length, finding utterance, he exclaimed—'*That's* a different thing, John—clean a different thing altogether, *that!* How durst he presume to do this, an' me an elder o' the Kirk o' Scotland?' 'Oh, that's clean a different thing, gudeman,' returned the imperturbable John, 'and a question only for yourself to answer; but christened the wean he *has*, this forenoon in my presence, as well as in that o' sindry ithers—*this* muckle ye may rely on, *ony how*.' 'Aweel, aweel,' soliloquised the considerate bailie, 'this is a matter that requires management, and canny, judicious management, too. In the meantime, *John*, as soon as ye hae putten up the beast, ye can gang to yer bed, and tak a nap; and as soon as ye rise in the morning, step down to Mr M'Kie's, and, wi' my compliments, say to him that he maun come up and tak' his kail wi' me to-morrow, gin the thing be at a' within the compass o' his power. But, John, I had amaist forgotten; what name hae they gien the bit thing?' 'They ca'd it Ann,' quoth John. '*Ann,*' repeated the bailie, with emphasis.

The fond couple met mutually embarrassed. The wife dreaded the effects of her imprudence, although as yet uncertain whether her husband was aware of it; but not a word on the subject was

mentioned by either party. Next morning the gudeman proposed, as a befitting thing, that Mr M'Kie should be sent for to baptise the child. The poor woman trembled, but said nothing. The minister dropped in about *kail time*, as if by accident; a short communing took place between him and his elder; their resolution was speedily taken, and the child christened again under the name of *Agnes*. The affair of the *twice-christened bairn* afforded much mirth to the neighbours; but it marred not the harmony of the worthy couple, for a word in relation to it never passed between them to their dying day.

"Many and oft have been the times, when the above particulars have been related in the garrulous spirit of extreme old age, by the doubly sealed Christian herself, to

HER GRANDSON."



SAMUEL MARTIN.

VII.

THE TWELFTH PARAPHRASE.

THE long and sedate ministry of William M'Kie was followed by three short ones. Thrice within the little space of about one generation, that is from 1764 to 1803, the parish became vacant, but on none of these occasions save the first was the vacancy made by death. David Blenchell died here, in the new manse which had been built for him at his coming. The eastern proverb came once more startlingly true—"When man builds a house, then Death steps in."

In 1769, Samuel Martin began in Balmaghie a ministry which was destined to last altogether about sixty-two years. The astonishing record of his predecessors, Macmillan and M'Kie, was thus broken. Macmillan served his great Master for 52 years, and M'Kie for about the same long period; but Samuel Martin was favoured in being permitted to preach and minister first in Balmaghie, and then in Monimail, for the space mentioned, being 10 years more. The combined pastorates of these three notable men covered the period between 1700 and 1829, or a space of 129 years.

Of Samuel Martin, there is little more to record than in the case of M'Kie. His ministry in Balmaghie ended in

1776, and in these eight years he managed to bring the parochial affairs into some degree of order. The old Session Records, written in his own quaint hand, show that he was a man of accurate and painstaking character, a lover of decency and order in the House of God, and of no mean business talents. At the close of this notice will be found some illustrative extracts which bear out this remark. It is, however, interesting here to note the confusions which attended a parish vacancy in those days. When Macmillan came to his parish, he found that the sacred utensils were comprised in "two coupes, two tables, and boxes for collecting ye poor's money;" while, in other respects, there was much to set straight. When Martin in his turn arrived, he had to face an even greater scarcity of utensils, since it is minuted that there was no "Bason for Baptism," that the tokens had been lost, and that there was only one old tablecloth for the Communion. The two old cups were still in use, and remained so until 1795. When finally discarded for our present cups, they had been in use for nearly 200 years. Martin set himself to provide proper furnishings for the homely Communion service, and for the Sacrament of Baptism, which was then dispensed, as it ought to be in all convenient cases, in church on the Lord's Day, and in face of the assembled congregation.

Proof also will be found in these old records, that the new minister was possessed of singular sagacity, as well as business aptitude. More than once in his short time, he had most perplexing cases to decide. Not once did his judgment err. He was apparently a man of deliberate ways, taking plenty of time to inquire and hear all sides;

but his opinion once formed was steadily adhered to. Studying the scanty memorials of his Balmaghie ministry, one at last comes to think of him as a type of the old "moderate" parish minister of the best school. No doubt, the name of "moderate" has gathered some unfavourable associations in certain circles. But for us, the "moderate" is the faithful but rational Christian pastor, tied to no war-chariot of party, either in Church or State; the high-bred yet homely Christian gentleman, who would scorn either an acted or a spoken lie, who is everybody's equal and everybody's friend, but no one's creature or crony. He is the servant of Christ and minister of God, yet about his bearing there is no element of mock sanctity or fawning cant; but he carries the sacred standard of religion with a soldier's true steadiness and dignity. We need not ask his help in advocating any mere crotchet, still less in upholding violent policies in the parish or in the nation. He fulfils an office and function distinctly marked out for himself alone; that of being God's advocate in every parochial question, but no man's and no section's agent. It has often seemed to me, that this was a frequent type in Galloway a hundred years ago, when as yet Scotland had practically but one religion and one national church. The inrolling waves of dissent and sectarian bitterness have perhaps overwhelmed most traces of such placid yet powerful ministries, although still, here and there, one finds a happy parish where the people are gently led on amid green pastures by a well-balanced and rational mind. Such occasional instances make us cast a regretful look backward on the old maligned "moderate" days, ere we return again to our own fevered religious life, broken and

disturbed as it is by so many new social, theological, and political currents.

Martin's quiet labours in the old manse and kirk, and amid the pastoral population scattered over these hills and dales, were too soon terminated by an event which has rarely happened in Balmaghie. He received a fresh call, being presented in 1776 to the parish of Monimail in Fifeshire by the patron, the Earl of Leven and Melville. There are striking similarities between the people of Fifeshire and Kirkcudbrightshire which must have greatly helped him in his new sphere. The people of Balmaghie made no demonstration on his departure, and there is nothing in the church or churchyard to preserve the memory of his connection with the parish. It might be a fitting and grateful duty, some day, for some one to erect a modest tablet recording the fact that Samuel Martin, for a brief space of eight years, "ran there his godly race." Before the use of leaden "tokens" at the Holy Communion passed away, along with other old Scottish religious customs, the people were, once at least every year, reminded of the fact. For each "token" bore his honoured initials, S. M., and the date 1770. This slight memorial, however, ceased after about 100 years, when printed cards came into use.

In his new sphere, Martin quietly continued the customs of his pastoral life, formed in Balmaghie; but his solid and amiable qualities soon won him high honours. Several times he filled the distinguished office of Chaplain to the Lord High Commissioner, and sat at his left hand in the Royal Gallery of the General Assembly. Between the Leven family and Martin a warm

friendship grew up. The homely yet dignified parish minister was the welcome guest of his noble patron, as he was of the humblest cottar in Monimail. A curious proof of his popularity among the poor of that parish is the preservation of his portrait* in a poor family for nigh a hundred years. We may surely believe that the features, so kindly cherished on paper, had also first been fondly imprinted on humble, grateful hearts. They were features fit to grace any assembly, but having a peculiar gentleness and kindly benevolence such as poor folk, especially, love to see in any religious teacher.

The one outstanding and surviving fact about Dr Martin (for he ultimately received the honour of a doctor's degree) is his authorship of one short paraphrase out of the 67 forming our collection. These paraphrases were prepared, like the Scottish Hymnal of our day, by a Committee of the General Assembly, chosen largely, no doubt, from among such of its members as were known to have a literary and poetical gift. While it cannot be said that this 12th paraphrase shows high poetical attainments, yet we may in a modest sense distinguish Dr Martin as the POET among our departed ministers, while perhaps we might style his predecessors, Macmillan† and M'Kie, respectively the PREACHER and the PASTOR. It is hard to believe that Dr Martin's efforts in rhyme began and ended with a single paraphrase; and we may therefore conjecture, that he had in his receptacles many other and even more ambitious compositions. Galloway is a land of poets.

* See page 94.

† Macmillan, however, was also a maker of verses. See his epitaph on his second wife; also elegy on her death.

The very shepherds and ploughmen blossom naturally out in poetry. Every heart here is readily moved by touching and beautiful verses. The quiet kirkyard contains no less than eleven poetical pieces, some of which may have come from Martin's own pen. In my opinion, they are nearly all above the average of churchyard verses, and deserving of permanent record apart from the fading stones. Dr Martin lived and laboured among an intensely emotional people, and the undercurrent of his life, like theirs, was highly coloured by imagination. Judging him by his sole surviving verses, the 12th paraphrase, we might indeed form a less favourable opinion, since his theme, the need of diligence and watchfulness, did not permit very imaginative treatment. But it is, at all events, pleasant to picture this kindly old Scottish minister polishing his homely lines, and quietly pacing the narrow walks of his garden on long summer evenings, while he conned over some phrase, or turned a new rhyme in his mind. This element of poetry in his massive character did not in the least detract from his methodical and faithful discharge of sacred duties. On the contrary, we can fancy that it made him all the more sympathetic and comforting at sick beds and in sorrowing homes. The clerical calling is a prosaic and dull one, apart from a poet's seeing eye and imaginative feeling. With these, the most sad and sordid incidents become instinct with human emotion; the narrow range of the parish expands into a whole world of typical joys and sorrows.

The teaching of Dr Martin's paraphrase is perhaps commonplace enough, but all the chief thoughts and lessons of practical life are so. There is nothing new

or original in the maxim that care and industry bring comfort, while idleness and recklessness invite the assault of want. Hogarth's cartoons show us the same eternal truth in life-like scenes, as we follow the Idle and the Industrious Apprentice through their respective careers. Dr Martin is in his way a humble Scottish Hogarth. In his old-fashioned rhymes, we see the busy ant hurrying on her provident task, laden with "incessant cares" all through summer days; we see, also, the sluggard reclining on flowery banks of indolence, with drowsy eye and folded hands; and behind him stands the menacing form of hunger ready to crush his "hoary head" in age. Any ingenious school-boy of our day, who can sketch, could quickly construct an emblematic picture from the old paraphrase.

What we to-day may well note and admire, is the sturdy, old-fashioned morality of the verses. Work hard, and it shall be well; idle and put off, sleep out life's bright, brief day, and a hungry old age must ensue. Copybook morality, some one may say, fresh from reading the up-to-date literature of our bookstalls and drawing-room tables. But some of the best things in character and morals are enshrined in our children's copybooks; and surely it is one more link to eternal righteousness, that our little ones should be set to copy out such homely, heart-reaching sentences as the familiar —"Waste not, want not," or "Industry brings Success;" or even, "Procrastination is the Thief of Time." It is just these worn paths of commonplace morality, which youthful feet are most likely to disdain, while straying to flowery byways of pleasure or idleness. And it is just to these

that our tired limbs struggle back, late or soon in life, when we have found that the flowers fade all too quickly, and that the green inviting turf too often hides a quagmire. Verses like the 12th paraphrase have been the spiritual food of thousands of Scottish boys and girls, nourishing in them the strong desire to work, and be honest and independent. May no day dawn in Scotland, when commonplace honesty, and commonplace diligence, and monotonous ways of righteousness, shall be laughed out of fashion among our people!

There is, however, a risk. Crude notions of social equality are abroad. Working people are learning (from idlers who talk and do not work) to rail at hard labour as an injustice, to demand a State thrift and a State support, to excuse any and every assault on property on the ground that they themselves have none. Just last week one such unsettled labourer gave me as a final ground for an attack on religious endowments the startling reason —"I have nothing to conserve!" Nothing to conserve! Has not the poorest and hardest-wrought Scotsman his character, as an honest man, to conserve? Has he not his manhood and independence to conserve? Has he not his religious faith in God to conserve? Has he not his little store of religious property, his own church and ordinances, to conserve? Such talk is not natural to a true-bred Scotsman. Its source is foreign and non-national. It is the unmanly whine of the paid agitator and self-interested demagogue. The true ring of Scottish faith and independence sounds from verses like Dr Martin's. Work, be honest, be temperate, be provident; and old age will find you, as it found him, hale and calm and happy;

ready to lie down without a murmer in the toiler's last couch, and to be mingled with the beloved soil, which has reared so many of our forefathers in a grand and dignified Scottish manhood.

I now give some extracts from Dr Martin's Session Records, 1769 to 1776. He began his ministry, like the famous Macmillan, by taking stock of the parish affairs. The elders were "Martin M'Clure, William Clacherie, John Ewart, and Andrew Livingston." Mr Martin was asked to act as clerk. It was reported that the Records could not be found, except scattered minutes from 1730 to 1760. Mr Martin was requested to make "all dilligent Enquiry" for the missing documents; but he must have failed to secure them, as none such are now in my keeping—not even those then reported to be in existence.

As to "Utensils belonging to the Church," it is minuted that "there is no Bason for Baptism, only two Sacramental Cups, an old Tablecloth, all in the possession of Mr Nathaniel M'Kie: the Tokens were lost some time ago." The Nathaniel M'Kie referred to was the eccentric but faithful minister of Crossmichael from 1739 to 1781, and a son of William M'Kie, minister of Balmaghie from 1710 to 1763. There is still no "Bason for Baptism," but we have a complete communion service of plate and pewter (which is now worth its own weight in pure silver); and the tokens were renewed by Mr Martin in 1770. They show his initials $\frac{S\ M}{1770}$ on one side, and the letters $\frac{B\ M\ G}{K\ K}$ on the other.

An additional elder not then present was William M'George; and William Dennistoun is added as being an elder elsewhere ordained, but now living in the parish.

The Session had in hand as Poor's Money upwards of £36. The Poor's Box was in the keeping of Mr M'George, and we shall see that a notable scandal soon arose in reference to it.

It was ordered that Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, be procured and kept.

The "Dues of the Session Clerk are, viz.:—For Baptism, Sixpence; for Proclamation, One Shilling and Sixpence when Both parties Reside in the parish, and Two Shillings when one of them is of another parish. The Beadle intitled to fourpence at Marrages and the same at Baptism; his Annual Sallary is Ten Shillings."

At the next meeting, December 4, 1768, Mr Claharty was appointed "Presbytery Elder."

On February 24, 1769, the Session met at "Camduziel" (Campdouglas), and Mr Hamilton was appointed Session Clerk at a salary of 10s per annum. "A Tent for the Convenience of Preaching during the Sacrament is ordered to be made."

At the next meeting, June 10, 1769, a formidable scandal came up. Mr Martin M'Clure, an elder, "Represented that he understood that an idle storie had been propogated concerning him in the exercise of his office, and that William Gordon in Tormorack* is traced back as the author of it." He demanded that the slanderer should be summoned, and it was resolved to "summonds" him to attend next meeting.

Accordingly, on June 27, Gordon of Tormorack appeared, and "Declared that he had observed that

* Now Hensol.

more than once, when Mr M'Clure was collecting, that he in time of pronouncing the blessing put his hand into the Box wherein the money is collected and afterwards put his hand in his Pocket, but is not certain what was in his hand, but that once Mr M'Clure himself told him there was both silver and brass in it, and that he believes many others saw and spoke of these things as well as himself."

The Session, considering the "Singularity and Difficulty of this affair," referred it to the meeting of Presbytery at Crossmichael on July 5 for their advice. Here is the Presbytery's very sensible deliverance:—

> "The Presbytery, after considering this matter, unanimously found no proof from the said declaration against Mr M'Clure, and that he is to be regarded as intirely innocent of anything that may be thought insinuated in such declaration, and recomend to the Minister to lay before his Parrish the necessary caution in every Christian in emitting anything rashly that may be capable of being construed against characters, especially of those in publick offices and connected with the Church."

Nothing, however, seems to have been done to the author of this cruel slander.

On July 30 the Session had an irregular marriage before them—two hasty persons having had themselves united by a Mr William Nixon in Dumfries, probably a dissenting preacher. As usual in such cases, the parties were rebuked, and made to declare their "acquiesence and adherence to one another as husband and wife."

At a succeeding meeting it was resolved to celebrate the Lord's Supper on 8th October "if the harvest was finished."

It had, however, to be "differed" till the 15th October, "upon the account of the badness of the weather," which delayed the completion of harvest.

Another irregular marriage came up this year, performed by James Brown, who, says Mr Martin with fine irony, "calls himself a minister." Parties were treated as before.

Next year the Lord's Supper was dispensed on the second Sunday of July, which remained the fixed day for this parish up to 1883, when two celebrations, one in spring and the other in autumn, were adopted. The collection was £2, 6s 9d. Of this sum £1, 17s 9d was spent at once on procuring tokens, &c.

In 1771 a precentor was appointed at a salary of 15s a year. A collection was taken to repair the wall round the churchyard.

In 1772 an irregularly married couple were condemned to be publicly rebuked and to pay the "usual dues," with a "consideration to the poor in lieu of the fine, not below five shillings." In the same year the vigilant Session protested against certain "Vagrants" being allowed to settle in the parish.

The last minute is dated October 11, 1776, and states that Mr Martin's translation to the parish of Monimail has been agreed to, and proceeds to give a full statement of the parish funds and utensils. There is a curious list of "Bills belonging to the Poor of Balmaghie," including "Mr Martin's Bill for £30 with 3½ y[ears'] interest—£34, 4s." Mr M'Clure held £5, 15s, and owed £4, 12s for interest. The total at the credit of the Poor's Box was £52, 3s 10d.

It is added—"*N.B.* The value of One Pound Sterg. was given to John M'Millan, late in Bar-end, for which he granted a Bill dated 23rd Feby., 1773, but the Bill is not judged of much worth, he being in some Respects an Object of Charity, but Recovery to be attempted."

The congregation appear to have helped themselves in those days, as it is recorded that £10, 8s 6d was laid out for the school, manse, and church. It is, however, significantly added, that the treasurer is to urge repayment of this sum by the heritors, as having been laid out "merely for the public service and as being more easily commanded than from the heritors, and paid too at the desire of one of the heritors, viz., Mr Mure of Livingstone."

The "Church Utensils" at this date were "Two Silver Cups, two Cloths for the Sacramental Table and a small one for the Middle Table, Tokens; there is also a Tent for preaching at Communion occasions, with Forms, purchased originally by the Session. . ."

NOTE TO CHAPTER VII.

The following communications have reached me regarding Dr Martin :—

I. "26th July, 1895. . . . . I recollect distinctly having seen in the parlour of Drumnagair, in this parish, copy of the lithographed portrait to which you refer. The farm-house was occupied up to 1863 by a venerable gentleman and his lady, Mr and Mrs Kidd. The former came from the south country, and had a great reverence for the, or his, old pastor. Mr and Mrs Kidd died at the age of 93. Mr Morrison, minister of Tron Parish, Edinburgh, is a nephew of Mrs Kidd. . . I once visited Monimail, and saw the monument of the good old man. . ." —*Rev. J. C. M'Clure, minister of Marykirk, near Montrose, since 1857.*

II. "27th July, 1895. . . He (Samuel Martin) was tutor in the family of Thomas Shairp, yr. of Houstoun, who resided during his father's lifetime at Bellfield, near Midcalder. Mr Shairp's eldest son was born at Bellfield in 1751. His name was also Thomas, and *he* had Mr S. Martin's son as tutor here to his sons (eldest born 1778). The younger Martin was clergyman in Fife—I think at Kirkcaldy. His son was minister of Bathgate. My mother well remembered seeing the three generations of Martins all here together on a visit. . . ."—*Letter from an officer in the army who desires to remain unknown.*

VIII.

MORE ABOUT THE TWELFTH PARAPHRASE.

IN a time when Sir John Lubbock's ingenious researches have thrown fresh and curious light on the habits of ants, this quaint Scripture Paraphrase, which invites the "indolent and slothful" to "view the ant's labours and be wise," should have a new interest for Scotsmen. Few of us fail to remember the old-fashioned lines, paraphrasing the saying of the wise man in Proverbs vi. 6-12. Modern science lends them added point, since it has strikingly demonstrated by experiment the instincts of order, organisation, and provident labour upon which the paraphrase dilates :—

> "She has no guide to point her way,
> No ruler chiding her delay ;
> Yet see with what incessant cares
> She for the winter's storm prepares :
> In summer she provides her meat,
> And harvest finds her store complete."

If there be any error here at all, it is in stating that the ant has no guide or ruler, at least among its own communities. Sir John Lubbock has proved that a complete system of subordination and discipline, with a regular division of labour, prevails among ants. More wonderful still, he has shown that they are

divided into distinct tribes, which recognise and distinguish each other, and exercise many arts of mutual defence and helpfulness. Ants of the same tribe know each other at once, and appear to cherish feelings of social kindness and humanity. Thus a new paraphrase might be composed, inculcating, by the example of these little creatures, the spirit of brotherly kindness and charity.

Samuel Martin was born in 1739, and on his ordination to the parish of Balmaghie he was therefore thirty years old. At this age most preachers of our time have already done five years' work in a parish. But promotion moved more slowly in the last century, and many able and accomplished men spent their best years as schoolmasters in a country village, or tutors to some noble or landed family. In point of fact, Samuel Martin had hitherto been engaged in teaching, combined with occasional pulpit appearances. Patronage at this time ruled supreme, and it was by the favour of the Gordons of Balmaghie that he at last entered on his lifework as a parish minister. The parish itself is of considerable extent, with a population at one time most numerous around the old church, but now chiefly housed in and near two widely-distant villages, each of which, unhappily, lies four miles off from church and manse. In Martin's time, however, the case was different. The population, numbering nearly 1000, lived and laboured largely within a three-mile radius of their pastor. The sites of many small "crofts" can still be identified within five hundred yards. Sometimes it is the clear, bubbling well, carefully built in with round stones, which mutely records that a thriving family once lived there. Sometimes

it is the ragged gable, with its wide ingleneuk still complete, and a solitary beech growing lustily at the spot where the garden once bloomed amid its trim hedges. In other cases the plough has destroyed all visible relics of these homesteads; but a skilled botanist, from some green patch of turf picks out a flower or herb which could have come there only by the kindly work of human hands, and he tells us that there must have been a cottage-garden at the desolate spot. The increase of large farms, and the exodus of labour from the country to the town, have wrought similar results all over Scotland. Samuel Martin's parish, however, was as yet untouched by such influences. From the narrow windows of his small manse he could see a score of houses, mostly full of children, who were employed, as they grew up, in the cultivation of their parents' crofts. Record still remains of as many as nine up to eleven sturdy sons and daughters being reared in cottages of three rooms and a "loft." On Sundays the little old church—a facsimile of Samuel Rutherford's church at Anwoth—was always full, sometimes even crowded, since it held no more than 100 souls. Such tiny parish churches throw a new light on our vexed question of non-churchgoing in rural districts. A population of nearly 1000 served by a building which contained only one-tenth of that number; this surely indicates that churchgoing has not fallen off, as our older hearers are prone to aver, but rather that our buildings have been enlarged beyond the bounds of former attendance.

Samuel Martin's ministry here was brief, but it appears to have been eminently active and acceptable.

Of his work in Monimail I can give no particulars; but that he proved as active and useful there, his memory, still green in that parish, amply demonstrates. The present incumbent, the Rev. James Brunton, B.D., has been most kind in furnishing me with any available particulars. But these are naturally scanty, and of a homely character. Oftentimes the best parish minister leaves hardly a trace behind him, save what He marks, who sees and marks all. It is said that during his long ministry in this beautiful Fifeshire parish, Mr Martin never failed, in summer or winter, to bathe every morning in a small brook running through a wood near Monimail Manse. "This," remarks my kind informant, "may help to account for his longevity." It also gives point to his poetical exhortation in the paraphrase:—

> "Ye indolent and slothful, rise!
> View the ant's labours and be wise."

None but an early riser could conscientiously tender such advice. At Monimail he became at length Doctor of Divinity. It was in this period that he composed the Twelfth Paraphrase, which breathes in every line a love of nature, a rustic health and suavity of feeling, and a firm belief in hard work. Its sombre close is quite characteristic of the paraphrases in general, and not at all surprising in one who had ministered in Macmillan's pulpit, and dispensed Macmillan's sacramental cup.*

Of the outward appearance and bearing of this venerable divine, distinct records fortunately survive. He is described

* Regarding the cup used by Macmillan, the Reformed Presbyterian father, tradition alleges that none, who was unsound or unworthy, could receive it sacramentally without trembling or turning pale.

as being "very courtier-like in his manners." His face, a remarkably fine and striking one, is preserved in a lithographed portrait dating from 1800, when he was over sixty years of age. The head is dignified, venerable, and resolute; but there are lines of gentleness and sympathy around the mouth. It is such a face and look as befit one who, through his quaint paraphrase, has warned thousands of Scottish youths against indolence and sloth.

He died in 1829, aged ninety—truly a "grand old man." He is buried at Monimail, "in an old churchyard where the parish ministers who die in the parish are laid to rest. His tomb is next to that of the Very Rev. Wm. Leitch, D.D., who was minister here before he became Principal of Queen's College, Kingston, Canada." So writes my kind correspondent, Mr Brunton; and he adds the simple epitaph:—

To the Memory of
The Reverend Samuel Martin, D.D.,
Minister of Monimail,
who died 12th Sept., 1829, in the 90th year of his age,
and 62nd year of his Ministry.
By doctrine and example he faithfully upheld the
Cause of Evangelical Truth.

Num. xxiii. 10. Phil. iii. 21.

IX.

"FACTOR JAMES."

THE "Galloway Herds," a poem occasionally scurrilous but often witty, is responsible for the familiar designation. James Henderson becoming minister in 1804, died at the end of 1838 or beginning of 1839; and for the greater part of his ministry he acted as factor on the Balmaghie estate. The union of two offices so dissimilar as that of pastor and factor, arose in his case in no discreditable way, but simply because Mr, afterwards Rear-Admiral Thomas Dempster Gordon, of Balmaghie, had in youth been Mr Henderson's pupil. Long before Henderson dreamed of being minister at Balmaghie, he had become tutor at Balmaghie House, and something like domestic chaplain. It was indeed the common road to preferment, in these bygone days. In a like fashion, Macmillan had bowed his obstinate head at the table of Murray of Broughton, and Martin had been the valued and respected tutor at Houstoun. It may be true that such early connection with country magnates bred in a few cases a snobbish and servile spirit. It was not so with any of our own departed ministers. Henderson had "tutored" two young Gordons at the quaint old mansion-house of Balmaghie, whose proprietor was patron of the parish, and on the erection of the

present church in 1794, gave the Communion vessels at present in constant use. Old Mr Gordon had a distinguished cousin in the north, from whose politics indeed he differed widely, but whose blood and family he of course approved; and when this cousin, George Dempster of Dunnichen, M.P., recommended as tutor a young protégé, James Henderson, thus sponsored by one county gentleman, was promptly accepted as family Levite by another.

Henderson, we can imagine, travelled down by coach from Dunnichen to the wilds of Galloway, which then deserved such an appellation in a high degree. It was just at this time that agriculture was beginning to rouse itself, and survey the vast undertaking which lay before it. George Dempster of Dunnichen was in fact a pioneer in the great agricultural movement of the end of the 18th century, and probably his influence had already been felt in Galloway. But at the time of young Henderson's journey, the fringe of this enormous enterprise had barely been touched. Everywhere he saw huge "peat-hags," since converted into blooming fields. The roads over which he drove, or rode with strapped valise, were often mere tracks. After leaving Dumfries, he must have felt as if he had left civilisation behind. He drew near his future home, little dreaming that he was to lay his bones, forty years after, beside the broad, marshy river which he crossed by the old Dee Bridge. For Glenlochar Bridge was not yet. At Balmaghie House he found his charge to consist of two "stirring" boys. The elder entered the army, and died a Lieut.-Colonel, before succeeding to his paternal estate. The younger became a sailor,

perhaps fought with Nelson at the Nile, and came home on his elder brother's death to be "laird of Balmaghie." In Henderson's time, all knew and feared him as "Admiral Gordon." Whatever talents Henderson may have had as a tutor, his pupil at all events emerged from the young minister's hands without losing his native fire and imperious temper. These, a seafaring life had not tended to chasten; and the whole result, when he became a sort of little king in Balmaghie, was a character such as Smollett would have loved to paint —hot and hasty in speech, tyrannical even when most beneficent, not averse to a full round oath at times, walking the parish road like his own quarter-deck, yet full of deep hidden reverences and wayward pieties. The "auld Admiral's" sailor-like piety made him an unfailing attender at the Sunday services in church. Tradition lingers, how he regularly went down to the manse of Sunday mornings towards twelve o'clock, and soon issued along with the minister, his old tutor, in friendly talk. The laird and the minister all over Galloway used to be seen in such decent comradeship on the Lord's Day. But that is now an "auld sang." Then, while the minister entered the pulpit, gravely hanging his cocked hat on a nail in the panel behind him, the laird proceeded to the Balmaghie square pew, and took his seat, surveying with stern observance his own tenants and servants around. Woe to the careless farmer, hind, or keeper who was absent without a satisfactory excuse! The wig-crowned head of the minister at length made its customary and courtly bow to the "patron," who duly responded, and so the simple orisons began.

The office of factor held by James Henderson, and his lifelong friendship with Admiral Gordon, the chief heritor, enabled him to confer on the parish one lasting benefit at least, that of a new manse. The older one had been erected on a bad site in 1764, and fifty years exhausted its comfortable use. It had an evil record, since in it died David Blenchell after only five years' pastorate, and John Morison the youthful and promising son of Philip Morison, successor of Martin. The present manse, and a simple inexpensive cross in the churchyard, are Henderson's memorials to our generation. Apart from his influence in the Church's favour, as a friend of the laird and a *persona grata* to the county gentlemen generally, Henderson's factorship won him only unpopularity. There is a hint, in the "Galloway Herds," that even the Presbytery passed a mild censure on the pluralist, who thus tacked on the publican to the priest. Be this as it may, the fact is certain that no more unpopular minister ever laboured in the parish, except perhaps the unfortunate Freeland. The latter, however, was liked by many for his Hibernian fun and freedom of manners. But Henderson had few friends except at Balmaghie House. A correspondent who withholds his name, writing from London in 1890, informs me that "Rev. James Henderson was very unpopular. . . . I cannot tell what he did, or what he left undone, only from what other people said. The fact that he had been factor and family tutor at Balmaghie, may possibly have injured him." . . . He adds, "Captain (afterwards Admiral) Gordon was bad, but people would not follow his example. They hated him; and if they met him on the road, coming as usual in dreadful majesty, the people who knew him

would much rather lift their foot to him, than lift their hat (if they dare)." To be the friend of such a friend was enough to make Henderson, even if himself personally amiable, disliked and distrusted; and to be his factor and prime minister, was enough to bring actual odium. The mistake of Henderson's life was his taking this factorship, since evidence exists that in himself he was a man of attractive and interesting personality.

The present writer has deemed it a sacred duty to take every possible pains to find out the truth about Balmaghie's most unpopular minister, and he has come to the deliberate conclusion that James Henderson was a man much misunderstood. The funeral sermon, preached by the Rev. Dugald Williamson of Tongland in Balmaghie Church on 3rd February, 1839, gives what appears to be an impartial estimate of the factor-minister. It is expressed with that care and precision, as well as formal eloquence, which mark all Dugald Williamson's published productions, and have led me to form the hope that much of the Tongland minister's manuscript compositions (and much is, I believe, in existence) may yet be given to Galloway and literature by some competent editor. No apology is needed for the following copious extracts, upon which I base my belief that James Henderson's character was never rightly appraised by his flock:—

"With the early history of Mr Henderson I am very slightly and imperfectly acquainted—almost all I know being that his settlement here arose from his connection with a gentleman who lived in a part of the country very remote from this quarter, George Dempster of Dunnichen, a man who was in many respects a truly great and

memorable character, and of no mean reputation in his day, as an enterprising and skilful agriculturist when the improvement of land was little attended to or understood; as a liberal and upright statesman, when politicians were narrow and corrupt; and as a Parliamentary orator in an age when the eloquence of Parliament was at its full blaze in this country. Of this eminent person, your late minister was first the domestic tutor, and afterwards the confidential friend and daily companion. He was not the man on whom the advantages of such an intercourse were to be thrown away, and it was obvious, from the whole cast of his conversation and manners, that he had not failed to value and improve them. Whatever signalised him as a man, as a clergyman, and as a gentleman—his sagacity and intelligence, his rich vein of pleasing and varied anecdote, his liberal, enlightened, and tolerant spirit, his unfailing good humour and evenness of temper, his decorous, easy, disengaged deportment, and his perfect good breeding—all, I have no doubt, was in a great measure owing to his early and intimate friendship with the distinguished individual whom I have referred to. . .

"I am not sure that familiar intercourse with minds of a high order is favourable to the discharge of such homely duties as those which a parish minister in this country is required and expected to perform. To descend from equal conversation with men who move in enlightened and accomplished circles, to a gracious contact with such prejudices as we perpetually encounter in matters of religion among the artisans and peasantry of our country, implies versatility of character which we cannot hope frequently to meet with; and least of all can we expect

to find this accommodating temper in one who, like your late minister, is advanced in years before being settled in the Church, and whose intellectual and social habits are consequently so completely formed as to admit of very little alteration or disturbance. Owing either to this circumstance, or to some cause not easily discovered or assigned, his appointment to this cure was at first far from being acceptable, and unless the laws of the Church had been administered by firm and faithful men, he would have fallen a victim to that popular violence which, under the name of zeal for a spiritual privilege, is nothing more than an insolent assumption of secular power. . . .

"The character in which, as a public man, he presents himself for contemplation, is that simply of a parish priest. His ambition rose no higher. This was the outline which it was the object of his long life to fill in. He selected a humble and narrow sphere, and did not wish to enlarge its boundaries or to leave it for another. He aspired to no distinction in literature or science. He had no turn for intrigue or faction. He looked on political agitation, whether in ecclesiastical or civil affairs, with a calm contempt which resembled magnanimity. . . .

"Within this limited sphere, his character and conduct were deserving of high commendation. In all his duties he acted from reflection rather than from impulse. His character was uniform and sustained—not enthusiastic or impassioned. His opinions were deliberately formed and tenaciously held. . . His information and advice on every subject which he professed to understand were sound and unerring; he gave them with the utmost frankness and facility, and on his truth, candour, and integrity, the most

implicit reliance might be placed. . . . He had a high and independent temper. . . . He could, when circumstances cast a transgressor in his way, show that, if he felt an insult with the sensibility of a gentleman, he was armed by his ample command of brief and cutting language, with the proper weapons to prevent the repetition of it.

"The vivacity and suavity of his manners, and the singularly agreeable, varied, and racy style of his conversation rendered his presence universally acceptable. Those who accused him of reserved and solitary habits, and of not coming often enough into the society of his friends, paid the highest compliment to his social powers. . . . Many apologies may be suggested for his secluded and lonely way of life. His health was uncertain—infirm for years before it finally gave way. He had outlived every one of his friends and contemporaries. His lot was fixed far from his native place. . .

"It never happened to me to hear him address you from this place, but on Sacramental occasions elsewhere I have listened to him more frequently than any other clergyman of my acquaintance. The general character of his sermons was plain, clear, and practical, delivered in a distinct, sonorous voice, and sometimes with considerable force and impressiveness of manner. . . . He was too fond of leaving his written paper, and wandering into an extemporaneous address. . . . The best specimen of his powers as a preacher which I remember was from the text, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' I heard him preach it for the first time fifteen years ago, frequently since, and always with the greatest

pleasure . . . simple, clear, devout, energetic, and, in several passages, lofty and sublime.

"But the part of public worship which he conducted with uniform acceptableness was the devotional. In the fluency, variety, fervour, and aptness of his prayers, there was something extremely natural and spontaneous. They were long and particular, but not tedious . . . they abounded with scriptural expressions and allusions. . . .

"The time not occupied by him in attending to the duties of his parish was spent amongst his books. Of these he had a various and well-chosen assortment on theological and literary subjects. . . . One of the last books, if not the very last, which he added to his library was a complete edition of the works of the poet Crabbe, to whose personal character his own bore some resemblance. . . ."

Few descriptions of character could be more complete, or more distinctly defined, than the foregoing. Its essential truth and fairness are established by several competent witnesses who either survive, or have left written testimonies.

The late schoolmaster at Laurieston, Mr W. M'Vitae, who also acted as agent for Woodhall, was a life-long intimate of Mr Henderson, and a frequent visitor at the manse. His surviving daughter, the present excellent postmistress at Castle-Douglas, has given me the following particulars: —Mr M'Vitae was constantly with his friend and minister during his last illness, and, in fact, raised his head for the last time before he died. Henderson's dying words were truly characteristic. The obnoxious window-tax had

greatly irritated him, especially as the then assessor of taxes, Mr Thomas M'Cracken, had seen fit to come out and personally enumerate the manse windows. This grievance had strangely taken hold of the aged minister's mind, and he said—"*Lift me up from among thae tax-gatherers!*"

Mr M'Vitae used to say, that any gossip bringing to the manse a story against his neighbour, received such a rebuke that it never was repeated.

Henderson possessed a good deal of humour. To a whining and hypocritical female who came saying that "she had lived a long time on *kail*," he at once responded by bidding his servant "go into the garden and cut her a *cabbage* for a change!" At a country wedding, when some bad language had been passing, he very gravely said at last —"I have had a great oath on the top of my tongue for some time, but really I cannot get it in!" This effectually stopped the swearing on that occasion.

Another friend has kindly given me some reminiscences, which complete our picture of a singularly reticent, close, yet high-minded man.

Henderson amassed a considerable sum of money, some of which was lent on mortgage. He died intestate, and his nephew, a partner of Messrs Fox and Henderson, London, fell heir as next of kin. This firm had a contract for iron-work for the Crystal Palace in 1851, and through business complications they became insolvent; thus, the entire estate of Henderson was swallowed up. The nephew had fully intended to erect a monument, but this change of fortune prevented the execution of his design.

Henderson's sermons were very long, as were also his prayers. These last had the irritating peculiarity that

"they seemed always ending, yet always began again." As people then stood up at prayer, much quiet amusement was caused occasionally, when an uninitiated person sat down too soon, imagining that the conclusion had been reached, while the clergyman continued after a pause to pour out his petitions.

Henderson was much liked by the few who knew him well, but quite misunderstood by the majority of his parishioners. They summarily dismissed him as a "near auld body," *i.e.*, miserly and grudging in money matters. That in his extreme old age (he was eighty when he died) he had become somewhat miserly, is an actual fact; but in his earlier days he is said to have been as liberal as others in his station.

We can easily sum up these interesting though homely details. James Henderson was apparently a man of high breeding and scholarly though retired habits, who had at one time seen much of the world; but in a remote place like the Manse above Dee Water, he gradually shrank into a narrow and solitary life. He was undeniably a good man of business, and a fairly faithful Christian minister. He was not at all a "popular" preacher, or an acceptable officiant at public worship. His reserved and somewhat cynical ways deprived him of such alternative popularity as is won by pastoral intercourse. Our people say of some ministers, "They're nae haund in the pulpit; but they're fine and hamely in the hoose!" Henderson unhappily was neither; and his command of "brief and cutting language" was a fatal gift so far as his kindly rough parishioners were concerned. His redeeming feature for

them was his humour; but even this does not seem to have been generally pleasant or kindly, but rather sarcastic—a thing abhorred and dreaded by our sensitive Galloway folk. But down beneath this shy cynical exterior, there was a loving faithful heart, with its affections somehow pent up and kept in through uncongenial surroundings.

I took Samuel Martin as a type of the old "Moderate" parish minister at his best. I may venture, without injustice to the dead, to take James Henderson as a type of the old "Moderate" at his worst. And the worst was not so very bad after all; for he did his parish work punctually, although coldly, and he killed humbug and cant by his polished brief sarcasms. Such men are needed, though not in remote rural places so much as in towns, where too often cant and rant rule unchecked. Henderson dying in his elder's arms, with Crabbe's coldly chiselled verses by his bedside, and a dying protest against the Window Tax on his lips, is a sufficiently vivid picture of the calm, restrained, scholarly, gentlemanly old minister. Such a death-bed is a thousand miles apart from Macmillan's; yet both had the vein of sturdy independence which, singularly enough, has been in all these bygone Balmaghie ministers. Macmillan faced the world with a solemn frown and protest. Henderson looked on at its doings with a dispassionate smile, almost a sneer. It was the weeping and the laughing philosopher over again. Which is right or wrong, we shall not try to decide; but this is certain, that both have their function in the world and in the Church. As to popularity, he who weeps over men's woes and sins is naturally more popular than the cynic or satirist, as Dickens is still a better-read author than

Thackeray. But do we not know now, how kind and how broken a heart beat beneath Thackeray's smiling and derisive exterior? And if we knew James Henderson's whole story, who can say what early disillusionment or disappointed hope it was which shaped him into the cold, laconic, unsympathetic man he lived and died, in this lonely manse?

H. M. B. REID.

X.

A GALLOWAY HERD'S SUNDAY: OLD STYLE.

A HERD, as every Scottish reader knows, is a shepherd, and in Galloway the parish ministers have been known as "Galloway Herds," ever since a certain witty but irreverent schoolmaster composed some racy verses on the eccentricities of the local clergy. The long string of rhymes known to the people of the Stewartry by the name of the "Galloway Herds," and still crooned over by the older inhabitants, contains references to such clerical peculiarities as parsimonious habits of life, "nearness" in money matters, fondness for good cheer, and the like. Some of the nicknames invented by the disrespectful rhymer stuck to the ministers through life. One in particular, who was noted for his habit of "dropping in" at farmhouses just when a sheep had been killed, and readily consenting to share the farmer's mutton, became familiarly known as the *Gled*. We can remember but the first line of his verse—"Gled Gorrie! Gled Gorrie, though *braxy* ye worry!" It need scarcely be explained that a *gled* is a bird of prey not fastidious in his feeding, and *braxy* is the flesh of a sheep which has been killed just in time to forestall the fatal issue of some disease.

A Galloway Herd has no sinecure, as a rule, seeing his parish generally measures a few score of square miles. A

great deal of walking and driving can be done in such a space in the work of visiting the cottages and farms. Very often, as in the case before us now, the "kirk" is placed at one end of the wide parish. Churchgoing becomes a serious problem on wet or stormy days. Several times in each year the homely tabernacle may be almost empty when its tinkling old bell announces that the minister is about to enter the pulpit. In many cases, and in ours for one, a bell is tolled an hour or two before service—probably the survival of some prior service now discontinued, or perhaps a signal to the cottagers hard by that it is time to dress for church. Here there is no village nearer than three miles, by a steep and winding "kirk road," lying among desolate hills and peat mosses, and flanked by a deep, still loch. Towards noon, on a fine day, a few groups of decently-dressed church-goers may be seen trudging over this path in the direction of the "Auld Kirk." As they go they discuss the news of the week—how the laird drove through the village last Thursday with a party of shooters, how Mrs Whiggam has had another "cheeper" (for so a new-born child is styled in the quaint parlance), how the Free Kirk minister and "oor man" are "gey thrang the noo, but I wuss it may conteenie;" how the minister was "very clever last Sabbath," how Jock Smith and Maggie MacSoutar seem to be "terrible pack thegither," and perhaps the "cries hae been gi'en in for the day." Such sober gossip beguiles the way till the rustic and rusty belfry of the Church appears at the foot of the hill, and the wayfarers halt to make a slight adjustment of their dress ere descending. Beyond the little square whitewashed

building rolls the sluggish river, as wide in this part as a loch, and nearly as still. At the side, the homely Manse is embosomed in trees and shrubs, and a lazy smoke curls from the chimneys. In the kitchen, the old servant is bustling about among two or three cronies, who rest here awhile before going up to the church. She is putting the last touches to the Sunday dinner, for the good man must have a comfortable hot meal after his exertions. Soon, she will exchange her clogs or pattens for the "Sabbath shoon," and get herself ready for service.

The minister is just closing his tiny Sabbath school. Twenty little children are all that the scanty population can send him at this point, but in other stations he gathers in as many more for their simple lessons. Each child has said his "ticket," containing a short verse of Scripture; has repeated a few lines of some simple hymn and a "question" in the Shorter Catechism; and has helped to puzzle out a chapter, verse by verse, sometimes word by word. The minister says a benediction, and dismisses the little gathering. Then he hurries down to the Manse to put on the "cloak," for there is no vestry to this primitive building. Soon, he is summoned forth by the tinkle of the bell, and proceeds gravely through the churchyard. Here, many of his flock still linger to exchange a last remark, but as they see him coming, all but a few hurry into the church. The old "bethral" opens the door wide for the minister, and then follows him to the pulpit, where he finally shuts him in, and departs to his own pew.

The service is of an improved order, for the Church Service Society is abroad even in Galloway. Still, a few

old people keep their seats grimly during the praise, and cast a look of little favour at the unassuming harmonium and the choir. At prayer they stand up open-eyed, and follow the solemn sentences with a critical air. The sermon is of course the chief centre of interest. Galloway folk listen well, and there are few sleepers, especially if the minister is at his best. But, like most Scottish hearers, they prefer a discourse delivered "wanting the paper," and they will stand a long one of that kind. They love dearly a bit of poetry in the sermon, and they cling to the old-fashioned mode of dividing it into *heads*.

The kirk "scales," and there is a rush for "machines," for many have driven the long distance from their homes. At the Manse stables, one gig after another receives its load of two, sometimes three, persons, and the restive little pony darts off at full speed. He knows as well as any one that the service is over, and that he is going home to dinner. The Laird's landau and pair roll off in more leisurely fashion. The Laird has stopped to shake hands with the minister, and exchange a few words on parish affairs. The minister talks for a few minutes to his elders, who are busy counting the small "collection." Perhaps a session meeting must he held, for poor Jinnet MacSweetie is in trouble, and desires to "stand the session." She has been at church as a matter of course, although no "cuttie-stool" is now employed for such penitents. Jinnet is sadly altered from the sprightly lass we knew a few months ago. She is pale and heavy-eyed, and her dress is less neat than of old. The minister's solemn but kindly admonition makes her weep; but she will never marry the faithless Saunders, whose confession she produces, written in very uneven and schoolboyish

characters. "Na! na!" she says, firing up amid her tears, "I wudna hae him noo gin he were to ask me on his knees!" So the session closes, and poor Jinnet trudges sadly home over some weary miles. The minister says good-bye to his elders and retires to the Manse.

A couple of hours after the minister's man brings round the "machine," and they start for a distant schoolroom, where Sunday school is taught. At the close the usual "preaching" ensues. Perhaps forty or fifty people attend from the village and neighbouring farms. An old precentor guides the psalmody here, and the dreamy strains of many an old tune, major and minor, are heard. At such meetings the "Free Kirk folk" come out regularly; even the Free Kirk pastor himself has been seen joining in the worship, and hearkening to his Erastian brother's discourse. The meeting ended, the minister gets word from a kindly neighbour, that old Tammy Broon is very bad, and Mrs Tamson "geyly ailing." He walks off to their cottages, and he will doubtless pray at each bedside; for it is no "veesit" without a prayer. It is now seven p.m., and the Galloway Herd is pretty well used up. But the Laird has asked him, as a special favour, to take family worship at the "big house," and old "Welshman," the minister's pony, is turned up the gloomy avenue, where night is already settling. Servants, lodge-keepers, gamekeepers, grooms, along with the Laird's family and guests, are assembled in the dining-room, and the minister conducts a brief evening service. "*Abide with me; fast falls the eventide*," is the closing hymn. Probably the tired "Herd" will dine with the family, and then quietly drive homeward through the deserted roads. Every cottage door is closed. The

lamps are out and silence reigns, only disturbed by the rattling wheels, or an occasional restful lowing from cattle lying out in the shadowy fields. The minister has spoken to perhaps three hundred souls out of a population of eight hundred; he has driven twelve or fifteen miles, and delivered five addresses; and he has visited several sick persons. Who can deny him, after the day's duties, a quiet pipe before he goes to bed? He locks his door, puts out the "study" lamp, and, candle in hand, seeks his chamber. Before lying down to a deep and dreamless sleep he takes a last look out at the shining slow river. The water is murmuring among the rushes of the broad marshy banks. The little belfry stands out boldly in a clear moonlight. The church is dark and silent, and round it the silent dead keep guard. It will be a fine day to-morrow, and the farmers will be able to "lead" their harvest. The minister's harvest is more distant, but let us hope not less sure. At any rate, he has laboured all day in the field, and may surely now rest awhile.

XI.

A GALLOWAY HERD'S SUNDAY: NEW STYLE.

THE "kirk road" is still a *via dolorosa*, a painful series of stages to be traversed ere the House of Prayer is reached. But an active Parish Council has already done some little towards making it less of a slough of despond in wet weather, and a miniature avalanche of loose stones in dry. Those who "travel to the kirk" are smarter than of yore. There is less, on most days, of the homespun coat and heavy foot, more of the younger and sprightlier element. From the "Brig" one or two bicycles come spinning up, with bells tinkling as by law directed, and driven meantime by men only. We may yet perhaps see John Anderson and his faithful partner revolving gravely on a sociable tricycle, as they proceed to church. There is a rapid succession of neat gigs and dogcarts, whose docile horses swing round to the Manse stables in a manner highly cheering to the weary student of non-churchgoing. It is noticeable, to a Herd of some experience, that there are more young people, and fewer grey heads and feeble forms. That means, that the foundations laid in Sunday schools and Communicants' classes are rising rapidly up to a firm and fixed habit of church attendance. May it be truly so!

The "tunes" are chosen, five in number, and mostly hymns. It may be regretted, but the fact stands that metrical psalm and paraphrase are fast going out. Perhaps the psalm will ere long reappear in due place of honour as a "prose chant." The paraphrase is doomed, unless to some extent it can be furbished up as a hymn. Rather than lose such noble and well-beloved lines as those of "O God of Bethel," "O happy is the man who hears," "Behold! the mountain of the Lord," "Ho! ye that thirst," "Come, let us to the Lord our God," "Father of all, we bow to thee," "While humble shepherds," "Hark! the glad sound!" "I'm not ashamed," "Father of peace," and others; rather than this, one would even consent to embody them in the *Scottish Hymnal.* One at least of these paraphrases can never be neglected in this church: the demure old Twelfth, with its Johnsonian phrases. And one other, to the hallowed strains of *Communion,* must ever be part, along with the 103rd Psalm to *Coleshill* and the "Old Hundredth," of our Scottish Communion Office.

There is a comfortable little vestry now, whither one may go in good time and complete such slender "robing" as a Scottish minister is permitted to transact. These "bands," the invidious distinction of a "placed man," the relics of a faded fashion in lay attire—are they destined to persist in the New Style? Much irritating pulling and patting and fumbling would be saved if clerical fashions changed here. There is a schism on the subject of hoods, promoted mainly by persons who have none or ugly ones. We say, that this is for each man's conscience and convenience. It is at best a badge of worldly honour, although a B.D.

hood may inspire confidence in the preacher's orthodoxy and safeness.

The bell has been bounding from side to side for five minutes; the thrilling moment, which never ceases to quicken the pulse even after many years, has come at last. Let the carefully prepared discourse be duly taken up in its worn old case. And take heed it be not upon sunshine and fair weather, if rain and east wind are without. There is a gentle echo of the simple opening voluntary. The beadle opens the door, and the short accustomed space to the pulpit is traversed. What different feelings one has had going over these few yards! Often it has been sheer despair for lack of a "right spirit within," to give a right message outwardly to a slender flock. Sometimes it has been exulting confidence, buoyed up by some unaccountable flush of religious fervour. "He is a very unequal preacher," it was said of one born in this parish, now famous as a writer. In the last capacity, too, he is unequal. Is not genius a high peak towering among uneven and humble projections? Must not one preach often "out of the depths," in order to preach sometimes from the heights? There is a brief pause for silent prayer. Let it be, that grace be granted and good voice. Strange that to-day we begin with "a purpose of marriage," instead of "Let us worship God." But young folks must be "cried," although wild horses would not drag them here to listen to their own names, with the sweet "between" linking them.

There is a full choir, and all goes well, with a solemn *Amen* at each close. Let the daily collect be repeated as well as memory permits, and the Lord's Prayer as its Author

gave it, ere we plunge into the sermon. It is a good day if there is perfect stillness, or only a long-drawn sigh at intervals. Never was any congregation so sympathetic and responsive as a Galloway congregation. Every point is seized. The risk is to press any one emotion too far, with such sensitive hearers, who will smile as readily as they weep. And a smile in "the kirk" is deadly sin.

Now we have our closing prayers and hymn, but let no benediction go forth until the ladle has made its swift round, and all offerings have been received. Meantime, a quiet strain of harmony (we dare not yet call it an *offertoire)* floats over the church. The beautiful old way is kept of taking the minister's offering last, and so sending him forth with the feeling that he too has worshipped and offered.

The blessing is pronounced, and all is hushed for a time. The New Style here is so customary, that we hardly now believe that men once pushed and nudged and shuffled, half-hatted, as the last words were said. But so it was, in this very place, but thirteen years ago. Then, every benediction caused an apparent panic, and all fled in blind haste from the place. Now, one here and there lingers to look at the sweet north window, and departs (we know) with tender thoughts of "Him that loved us."

In the vestry, the ladles discharge their small burden, and the routine of session duty is gone through. The "discipline case" is still in the land. The foul blot on Galloway manhood seems no smaller. But opinion grows among educated men, that such discipline is a worn-out form.

Some miles off, there is Sunday school and service in a diminutive village hall. And then there are two baptisms

in private houses; for our kirk has still no font, nor willing people to use it if there were one. Baptism in private, though it be a misdemeanour, is yet a kindly social function, at which the chief Galloway beverage (I mean tea, and mean it seriously) figures honourably. The little ones, boy and girl (the boy first if one can) are named, and give their little cry of surprise; and pleasant, cheery talk sends the Herd homeward refreshed. A friendly companion lightens a mile or twain with his equal step. Then good-night, and good-bye!

Still the river dreams and whispers among the rushes. A few lights gleam "across the water," some fringing the opposite bank as if to signal some wayfaring boat. There are deeps and shallows out there, where the moon is on the water; and the deep is often but one step beyond the shallow. This day, one has touched both depth and shoal. In a worthy and inspiring "kirk" we have been plunged into the infinite, and in the common meetings outside we have found wholesome footing again. As to-day, so the whole week. The sublime will melt into the commonplace, and the commonplace may suddenly explode into the tragic. May we keep our balance in both, and learn from the shining river that "in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength!"

EPILOGUE:

THE KIRK AND THE RIVER.

The River flows beneath the Kirk,
And on its banks men rest and work,
And week by week
The bell doth seek
An echo in their hearts below
Beside the River's flow.

And still, when silence reigns around,
Is heard the soft mysterious sound—
A murmur sweet
Beneath our feet
That tread the path of daily toil
Upon this ancient soil.

The River speaks, when man is dumb,
Of all that yet may chance to come—
Of Life that lives,
Of Love that gives
E'en life itself in lavish love
Upon the banks above.

Men come and go within the Kirk
On Sabbath days of light or mirk;
And then, at last,
Life's stream gone past,
They come, but nevermore go forth
From out the Kirkyard earth.

Thus in old years the tide hath flowed,
Of youth and age, along the road
Beside the bank
Till each life sank
And ebbed into the narrow cell
Where all at length is well.

So run our life poured forth from God,
In streams of gentleness abroad,
That, when we die,
No dear one's eye
May weep that, by the quiet Kirk,
We rest at last from work.

INDEX.

Ages, great, 35.
Andrew, Saint, 24, 55.
Ants, in 12th Paraphrase, 87, 95; Sir John Lubbock on, 95, 96.
Apostles, medallions of, 24.
Bairn, Twice-christened, 54, 77.
Balmaghie, meaning of, 31; M'Ghies of, 31; Gordons of, 18, 41, 101; Graham Hutchisons of, 24; Population, in Martin's time, 97.
Balmaghie House, preaching at, 51.
Baptism, "Bason" for, 89; "Twice-christened Bairn," 54, 77.
Barend, M'Millan in, 66.
Barnboard, riot at, 53; John M'Kinel in, 36.
Bats in Church, 22.
Bees in Church, 21.
Belfry, haunt of starlings, 20.
Bell, inscription on, 18; ringing of, at 11 a.m., 20.
Bible, Morison's, 19.
Blenchell, David, *minister,* 1764-8, 43.
Bodden, Nathaniel, *epitaph,* 38.
Bothwell, 55.
Braefoot, supposed to be M'Kie's house, 71.
Brasses in Church, 24, 25, 27.
Broomhill, where Macmillan died, 55.
Burnet of Quintenespie, *lapsed,* 36.
Burns, Rev. Thomas, on Communion Cups, 41.
Bush-a-bield, 36.
Chapman, Robert, "*reidar,*" 1560, 19.
Charters, Alexander, covenanter, 34; *epitaph,* 39.
—— Robert, *epitaph,* 34; Church, old partly remaining, 18; new, 17.
Clark of Slogarie, *lapsed,* 36.
Communion, date, old and new, 92; postponed for Harvest, 91; tables for, 93; tablecloths, 93; forms for, 93; cups, 89; tune *Communion,* 120.
Contributions, voluntary, 25, 93.
Covenant, National, 50; and Solemn League, 50, 56.
Covenanters in Kirkyard, 34; epitaphs in verse, 37, 39.
Crae, Kelvies of, 36.
Craig, Rev. A. B., 33.
Craig-croft, 36.
Crabbe, 108, 111.
Crockett, S. R., Introduction by; family tombstones, 29.
Crossmichael, 17, 51, 77: Presbytery deposes Macmillan at, 51.
Crucifixion, stained-glass window, 23.
Dalserf, Macmillan's epitaph and monument in, 64.
Dee, Water of, at Balmaghie Kirk, 17; its symbolism, 17; ferry across, 52; ploughshares thrown in, 54; minister brought across in coffin, 75; bells rung along meadows, 20.
Dempster, George, of Dunnichen, M.P., 101, 104.
Dickson, a *dyer,* 36.
Douglas, of Bisley, family tombstone, 29.
Dubbidale, 36.
Edwards, Blanche, *epitaph,* 35.
Eels in Dee, 48.
Elders in 1769, 89.
Epilogue, 124; epitaphs, 29, 37; in verse, 37, 39.
"Factor James," 100.
Ferry across Dee, and as used by Presbytery "supply," 52.
Fine View, 36.
Forms for Communion, 93.

Freeland, William, M.D., *minister*, 1847-53, born in Ireland, 45; character.
Galloway, Earl of, his Cummunion Cup, 41.
Galloways of Sandhills, 65.
Gemble, Jean, 65.
Gibson, Alexander, *minister*, 1839-46, 44; tablet in Church, 27.
Goldie, Edward, of Craigmuie, 65.
Gordon, Admiral, 102; of Tormorack, 90.
Gordon, Mrs Mary, *epitaph*, 32; in verse, 37; elegy on, 85 (*note*).
Grieve, John, M.D., great-great-grandson of Macmillan, 66.
Halliday, David, portioner in Miefield, 34; in Glengape, 34; verses on, 37.
Harvest, Communion "differed" because of, 92.
Henderson, James, *minister*, 1804-38; bred at Dunnichen, 100; tutor at Balmaghie, 101; his unpopularity, 103; death-bed scene, 109, 111; Dugald Williamson's funeral sermon on, 104; his factorship of Balmaghie, 104; his verses in *Galloway Herds*, 100; his grave, 103: his preaching and prayers, 107; anecdotes of, 109; compared with Macmillan and Martin, 111; character, 106.
Hensol, 90 (*note*).
Herd, a Galloway Herd's Sunday, Old Style, 113; New Style, 119.
"Herds, The Galloway," satirical verses, 100.
Hill of Grange, 36.
Hourglass with wings, 37.
Houstoun, Shairp of, 94.
Hutchison family, tables erected by, 24; gifts of, to Church, 25.
Ironganoch, 36.
Johnstone, John, F.C. minister, 33.
Kail, 109.
Kelvie of Crae, *lapsed*, 36.
Kirk above Dee Water, date, 17; shape, 49; belfry, 20; bees, &c., in, 21: restored, 1894, 23; tablets in, 27; stained-glass in, 24.
Kirkyard, Balmaghie, gate, 29; Douglas Stone, 29; consecrated ground, 30; suicide's grave, 30; unbaptized infants, 30; ministers' corner, 31; oldest stone, 36; martyrs' stones, 34; poetry, 37; roses in, 73; thruch-stones, 31; epitaphs, 37; shortest epitaphs, 35; remarks on, by an old boy, 40.
Kirk Session, in 1769, 89; discipline cases, 91; minutes of, 1769-76, 89, 93.
Ladles, 122.
Lairds, *lapsed*, 36.
Latin phrases, &c., in kirkyard, 37.
Laurieston, 114.
League, Solemn, 50. 56.
Livingstone, Mure of, 31; Alexander, *epitaph*, 39; Charles, *glover, fined*, 53.
Longley, 36.
Lowe, author of "Mary's Dream," 77.
Lubbock on Ants, 95.
Macmillan, John, *minister*, 1694-1700; sickly, 43; his grave, 32; epitaph, 43; his descendants, 66.
Macmillan, John, *alter minister*, 1701-1725; born at Barncauchlaw, 49; tutor at Cally, 100; ordination, 49; deposition, 51; his work, 61; death-bed scene, 55; character, 61; compared with M'Kie, 76; and with Henderson, 111; monument at Dalserf, 64; his cup, 61; founds Reformed Presbytery, 62; his seal, 62; a poet, 37, 85.
Manse, Blenchell's, 1764, 103; new manse, 103.
Marriages, irregular, 91, 92.

Martin, Samuel, D.D., *minister*, 1769-76; tutor at Houstoun, 94; a poet, 85; twelfth paraphrase, 86; translated to Monimail, 92; chaplain to Lord High Commissioner, 84; personal habits and appearance, 98; grave and epitaph, 99; character, 83; a "Moderate," 83; Session minutes, 89; error as to ants, 95; his "bills" due to Kirk Session, 92; his care of Church property, 82.
Martyrs' stones, 34.
Melville, Earl of Leven and, 84.
"Moderates," what, 83.
Moffat, William, *drowned*, 35.
Milroy, John, *epitaph*, 38.
Minnigaff, 49.
Ministry, average duration of, in Balmaghie, 47.
Mitchell, Hugh, signs protest against M'Kie, 69.
Monimail, 99.
Morrison, Philip, *minister*, 1777-1804, 43.
Murdoch, William, a rioter, 71.
M'Caa, William, *epitaph*, 38.
M'Clacharty, Mrs, *epitaph*, 39.
M'Ghie, Hew, *minister*, 1615-1638, his family, 42; communion cup, 41.
M'Ghie, Sergeant, 30.
M'Kie, William, *minister*, 1710-1763, his ordination, 69; glebe riot, 71; temporary manse and Church, 70; marriage, 54; enters manse, 72; his ministry, 73; death, 74; character, 76; epitaph, 38; compared with Macmillan, 76; monument, 74; his family, 75.
M'Kie, Nathaniel, *minister* at Crossmichael, *epitaph*, 77.
M'Kinel, John, in Barnboard, 36.
M'Lellan, David, *drowned*, 35.
M'Vitae, schoolmaster, 108.
Neilson, 29.
Owls in Church, 22.
Paraphrase, Twelfth, 81; favourite paraphrases, 120.
Pencaitland, 46.
Poet, Martin and Macmillan as poets, 85.
Poetry, churchyard, 37, 39.
Precentor's salary, 1771, 92.
Presbytery, meetings of, 67.
Pulpit, old and new, 24; hanging up hat in, 102.
Quintenespie, Burnets of, *lapsed*, 36.
Reformed Presbytery founded by Macmillan, 62.
Reid, Henry Martyn Beckwith, *minister* 1882: changes effected in church service during his ministry, 46; Church restored 1894, 23.
Riach, William Lyon, *minister*, 1853-5: translated to Pencaitland, 46; to Edinburgh, 46.
Rimmon, House of, 67, 71.
Ringcroft ghost, 42 *(note)*.
River Dee, 17, 20, 51, 52, 101, 118, 123.
River and the Kirk, The, 124.
Rood-screen, 24.
Roses in Kirkyard, 73.
Short, George, *martyr*, 34.
Slogarie, Clarks of, 36.
Stevenson, Thomas, *minister* 1855-81, 46.
Stone, oldest in kirkyard, 36.
Swearing, profane, rebuked by Henderson, 109.
Tablets in Church, 27; Tent for preaching, 93.
Token, Martin's, 84, 92.
Tormorack, 90.
Tramp buried, 31.
Ward, Catherine, 35.
Watkins, Adrian, 19.
Williamson, Catherine, 32; Dugald, 104.
Windows, stained-glass, 24.
Window-Tax, 109.

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